MOTIVE

Issue Three

MOTiVE

Issue Two

September 15, 1990

Salutations,

I've been tempted to call this the *plague* issue of **MOTiVE**. Things around the homestead have been a mess, and yes, that does rhyme with I.R.S. Some have fallen to MINAC (Scott and Jay), but others have joined to fill our ranks (Jon, John and David).

Your nominations for next years OE need to be sent to Deena. See the copy of the Constitution and Rules (Sec. 10-12) for details.

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Issue Three

The Constitution of MOTIVE

12/10/89

Article I

MOTIVE is an Amateur Press Alliance (APA) designed to promote communication between role-playing gamers.

Article II

The Official Editor (OE) shall see that the mailings are distributed to all members. The OE shall create all rules pertaining to deadlines, dues, maximum membership and any other matters related to mailing-to-mailing government. The OE shall be elected by a simple majority of the voting members for a period of one year.

Article III

The Constitution can be changed by a two-thirds majority vote of the membership.

The Rules of MOTIVE

3/15/90

The prime directive: each member has control over their own submissions, therefore, **have fun**. ALL copyrights to any material in **MOTIVE** revert to their original owners.

1. **Membership and dues** are $15.00 per year for six bi-monthly mailings. A first class postage membership costs no less than $20.00. Contact the OE for specific prices. Membership is first come first serve, until the roster limit is met.

2. The **roster limit is 25.** A small group of people who choose to have a joint membership count as one membership, receive one copy, have one vote, and pay one set of dues.

3. **Membership termination** occurs when MINAC is not met, dues are not paid, and through resignation.

4. The **copy count** (CC) refers to the number of complete copies of your submission that you send to the OE. The CC is presently 25. If you send one less than the CC, you will receive the **MOTIVE** without your submission, and the OE's wrath. Any number less than this and your submission will not be included.

5. **Minimum activity** (MINAC) is four pages (two pages front and back), every other mailing, split any way you wish. Of these four, three must be completely original to motive. Overdue material will not count towards MINAC.

6. The **copy must be readable** and of NLQ typeface or better. Submissions should be reproduced on double-sided (front and back), colored paper. Please stick to one color, per submission.

7. **Collate** your material, but **DO NOT STAPLE IT**.

8. **Deadlines are deadlines.** Beginning with the first issue (5/15/90) the deadlines will be the 15th of every odd-numbered month.

9. The **waitlist** will consist of five persons waiting for a membership to open. Here are the rules:
   A. Waitlisters maintain their position on the list by writing the OE by every issue's deadline. A position is granted on a first come, first serve basis.
   B. Waitlisters may purchase **MOTIVE** from the OE for $3.00 (if available).
   C. Waitlisters may contribute to **MOTIVE**, but receive no vote or copy of **MOTIVE** (unless they buy a copy).
   D. Should a position come open, the top waitlister will be invited to join by sending their dues and submission. If this waitlister fails to respond then any waitlister may attempt to join that same mailing, by having their submission and dues in, etc.

10. The **Official Editor** (OE) nominations are made with the submissions to the fourth issue (November 15, 1990). Elections occur with the fifth issue and the results are made known in the sixth issue. All elections and nominations are made on a separate ballot and and sent to the Official Teller, not the OE.

11. The **Official Teller** (OT) for all elections is chosen each year before the fourth issue. The OT is responsible for tallying the votes and reporting the results in their next submission.

12. **The Current OE**
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AMPERION"S THOUGHTS

BOLTS of BEDEVILMENT

Michael Steven Schapira

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This is the aktion pakked third issue you've been antikapating. Sorry about the k's, but the _ on this Mak does not work. This Issue you get to meet the Yorikk (both are k's) Khief of the AEsir. Perhaps there will be another X-word and a bit of history of my first kampaign.....The Kastle of Death. There is also be a bit about the kity of Mardlumber (a contest may be held later to rename my kity) where many a powerful veteran and monster own all the usual shops. Both of these last two are from AD&D modified to suit me, and perhaps a little on the Monty Haul side, but they are about 5-10 years old. Plus the the long awaited results of the Motive Questionnaire.

But first references to last issue. Wayne....keep up the good work in terms of cover artists. Sersus.....four stars once again. Death to...Null....How will the rest of us enjoy your mailing comments if we don't see 'em. Besides it took you almost 4 months to send me the Battletech data I wanted (thanks.. I did get it this past week.) And when will you both stop using that stupid french sounding word....milieu?? To answer your question of last issue.. Giant Spiders don't karry kopper pieces. They get stuck to the 'fur' while they eat the hapless and now dead adventurer, or they get swallowed and are found during the desecrate the dead monster body phase of post combat play. Void....interesting adventure log. What do you mean....retentive???? Can I have the rest of Konnie Chung after those women get the head or does

Sersus have first dibs? Psypher must have been a real role-playing challenge for you...after all, he is unsure of his motivations.

Gaming Spouse.....If you got a questionnaire send it. Late data better than no data, besides you won't be alone..and you had a good reason.

Random Samplings...Nifty cover. Dialog and continuing story are neat. Primus files....very interesting.

Khem Geek......What does a wanderer do in Moringill....brave the ruins for loot or go to oust the witkh-hunter or???

Game/Foot......Where were you the night of the Call of Chthulu game. I was in Athens and looking forward to meeting a Motive-person I did not know.

Blue View.......Interesting character. As for anon. freshman...always funny.

Druid/Witkh...Somehow the characters are not at all suprising from the few times I have been so fortunate to play in a game with either of you. As for Wish-fulfillment charakters...maybe that is inherent in the games, as a result of the creation methods, and the fact that they are played for fun, and not to see who can take 'character X' and play it properly. I think that commonly people put a bit too much emphasis on how players end up with similar characters as opposed to having a reasonable mix of types, of which only type X seemed to be successful and played more or imitated. I know I have played a wide assortment of characters.....F , MU , T , a paladin, Energy Projectors, Bricks, and although I have played many....usually everyone picks to remember only the characters they had the most fun joking about.

Fishy Bits.....Thanks to both of you for drastically improving my opinion on Call of Chthulhu. Enjoyed it very much. MOOo-ooo. More please.

Column in Search....How come all the people I know have a paranoia fixation note even the characters they play have it. Don't you get it... I'M NOT.

Snake of Forever.... Looking forward to more.

Sekrets Vulcan....Harlequin I knew, but Egyra was pleasant and new to me.

Elvis Post.....Long live Thew...even if he doesn't lead in Atlanta. How about presenting your most excellent Star Wars adventures which I was so fortunate to play in at MOC the past two years. Not all of the Motive people were so fortunate.

So mukh for mailing comments. Looking back I see that the c key has made a few appearances. Oh well, hopefully the k's kept you all on your toes. If not, tough. Next I'd like to introduce a man who is known to some of you as a tough Barbarian playing hero in the 20th century, but who is also a hero with a heart and feelings, and perhaps a child-like case of homesickness.....

YORIKK Chief of the AEsir

The clarity of the night annoyed the tall chieftain of the Aesir warriors. If only the moon would fade away as it used to, but four months had past since the last moonless night. Well, that will end tonight. Ahead a patch of woods affords a last chance to confer with his men.

"Gather, my warriors, and take heed. Tonight we go to fell a most foul sorceror who keeps the moon from its monthly changes. He must die if we are to be free of the continual attacks of the werewolves. As for his servitors, they are all evil, be they living or undead, so slay them all. Remember your firebrands and your luck charms, but most importantly remember you are AESIR. We will not be defeated by these dark ones. Now, let us each savor a swallow of the battlebrew the women made for us and then have at those scum. "

All the men took a swallow of the mildly alcoholic beverage that contained many things the men did not know existed, but tasted good, and then they all held their weapons up and charged at the village that was soon to be decimated by their primal rage.

The battle was not long, his sixty warriors were among the finest in the northern villages, and although they fought the supernatural, they knew that fire would destroy such creatures and that the human allies of the wretched undead would fall before their blades. Their confidence did not waver in the face of the horrible creatures, even the fear of the becoming undead if they fell erased by the knowledge that their brothers would slay any who might be infected. After 15 minutes most of the village was in flames and the air smelled of burning flesh. A single hut was as yet untouched. Yorikk entered with his blood-brother Evaan-Torr. The hut was the largest in the village, fully fifty feet in diameter. In the middle were two fires, one of which was covered by a large black cauldron. Air bubbles of hideous purple and orange colors floated above it and a nauseous stench filled the hut. A few feet away a dark skinned man stood, chuckling as he watched the two barbarians enter his hut. Snapping his fingers he summoned an 8 foot tall demon from the shadowy recesses of the hut. The sharp-toothed, bat-winged, hellish gorilla jumped at Evann-Torr. The two fell to the ground grappling and stabbing and kicking. Knowing the dangers of free time given to a wizard, Yorikk charged. Having expected Yorikk to help his brother, Melkot was suprised and barely backed beyond range of a swing that would have crushed his head. The sorceror regained his composure quickly replying with a mystic attack of his own. Speaking only one word a black vapor seeped from his finger coalescing into a whip of dark energy. The first crack missed Yorikk, but hit his small buckler which quickly turned into a cloud of splinters. Realizing this was a weapon to avoid Yorikk leapt back and pulled a knife from his boot. As he drew back to hurl it, he saw Torr about to have his neck bitten by teeth that would shame a bear. A slight adjustment and his blade entered the demon's skull rather than the wizards. The demon howled, and hurled Torr with such force that he was no longer in the hut. Faced by two foes, one of whom was pulling a knife out of its own skull, Yorikk started to think maybe his tribe should have just relocated. Knowing it was too late for such thoughts he jumped so that he was between his foes. Praying that his speed was up to the task he waited for the whip and demon to approach him and dodged so that they met. Eerie colors filled the hut and the sorceror was chanting new words with fear in his voice. Seizing the moment Yorikk dove for the mage but was truly amazed when an unusual vision suddenly appeared between him and his target. He had a moments glimpse of hot sand and sun and an unfamiliar ocean. Then he was conscious of falling, and then of nothing.

He awoke surrounded by scantily clad people several of whom wore

unusual war paints on their noses. The women seemed quite lovely, perhaps a bit thin, but certainly worthy of his attentions. The men seemed to be lacking in warrior build, except for a few that looked too big to be normal men. He heard them asking questions and knew their words, though they were not in his language. Rising he felt dizzy and disoriented and yelled "Where in the name of the Facets of Life am I?" The crowd started towards him and he grabbed his morning star. The people gave a little space, and then considerably more when he hit a stud on the handle and spikes emerged from the head of his weapon. He then took off down the beach at a pace that made the women swoon and the men discuss pro football. Cops showed up (minutes late, as usual) and began questioning. A detective/hero named El Hombre also showed up. Proving to be more competent than the police he was able to track down Yorikk first. As it took a couple of hours for him to be found Yorikk had already begun to think about his predicament. So when El Hombre showed up it was not hard for him to decide to talk and gain information rather than fight. Yorikk learned that he was in a place called Miami. El Hombre took him home and explained the world of 1988, and hired him to assist his agency while also searching for a way back to his own time and place. Thus passed July and August rather uneventfully. September brought action in the form of the "Scourge of the Sea" Champions module. Yorikk has become accustomed to our era (better than one might have expected him to), although he doesn't understand a lot of things. He wears Levi's (not button-fly 501s) and his chieftain's pony tail. He still longs for a way home. Although the moon is back to normal he wishes to be with his people and to know if his brother survived, and how the battle ended. As an Aesir chieftain he has lived by the 78 Facets of life. These are: 1) Battle 2) Eating 3) Drinking
4) Killing 5) Raping 6) Pillaging 7) Mayhem
8) Looting 9) Feasting 10) Sex 11) Siring Heirs
12)Hunting 13) Wenching 14-78) More Killing.

Needless to say he feels that our world is a bit stupid, depriving him of almost 70 facets of life. But he figures it is a sacrifice he can live with to remain free and to eventually find a way home. Besides our alcohols are considerably better than any from his era.

Over the five weeks he was played he gained 14 ep. I will show him as he ended the session. As a last note before digressing to mere stats, his most famous line in the adventure was "Let's catch the night-bus to Lubbock".

Yorikk is 6' 8", weighs 250#, has blonde hair and blue eyes. At 26 years old he has quite a physique by modern standards (having 'human' maximums for a some stats, and beyond for Con.). He does bear many scars, and wears his pony tail in a braid that reaches his lower back. Coming from the village of Jotun near the river of kings in his AEsir homelands he does not trust redheads (who remind him of the hereditary foe Vanir), though he certainly doesn't mind the females of that sort....forbidden fruit.

In his adventuring he has acquired a Rolex, and an alien gold armband. He has learned enough about our money to count his change, though usually it is unnecessary (only an idiot shortchanges a huge man with a club...right?).

The Barbarian Fighting Style he possesses is as follows:

Basic	OCV	DCV	Damage	Special
Slam	0	-1	+d6(+2d6)	opponent on ground, Abort
Roll w/Blow	0	-2	None	1/2 damage, Abort
Nerve Punch	+1	+1	as STR	NND

+1 level w/ HTH combat — Familiarity w/ melee weapons

AEsir knowledge 11- — Min Stats STR13 DEX11 CON13

Advanced				
Disarm	-1	-1	None	Disarm opponent
Strike	+1	+1	+2d6(+3d6)	Abort

+1 level w/melee weapons — Combination Maneuver +d6 to attacks

Min Stats DEX15 CON18 SPD 3

Yorikk Chief of the AEsir

Cost	Characteristics	Value
10	Strength	20
30	Dexterity	20
36	Constitution	28
16	Body Pips	18
0	Intelligence	10
2	Ego	11
10	Presence	20
1	Comeliness	12
7	Physical Def. (4)	11
5	Energy Def. (6)	11
10	Speed (3.0)	4
0	Recovery (10)	10
0	Endurance (56)	56
-1	Stun (42)	41

126 pts. Total

Cost	Skills
3	English
5	Stealth 13 or less
7	Detective Work 16 or less usable only for Tracking(+1)
20	Barbarian Fighting Style Basic and Advanced
1	Aqualung Operation
3	+d6 Damage to BFS Attacks

Total 39 pts.

Cost	Powers	END
8	Running +4"	2
6	Swimming +3"	1
5	Ego Defense 7 pts.	0
5	1/2 Endurance Cost for STR	0
16	Enhanced Senses E. Hearing +2 E. Vision +2 IR Vision Discrim.Smell	0
23	'Bracers of Defense' OIF(+1/2) +10 PD / +10 ED Half Damage Resistance	
14	Morning Star w/retract. spikes +1 1/2 d6 Hand Killing attack + 5d6 to Strength OAF +1 (25pt Multipower 4pt slots)	

77 pts. Total

100+pts.	Disadvantages
25	Enraged 14- When hit for BP Recover on 8-
10	Hunting Mystic Portals 8-
30	Hunted by Melkot 8- w/ undead+demons etc.
20	Psych.Lim. Superstitious Very Common Irrational
20	Psy.Lim. Won't refuse Solo Contest...Combat or Drinking
10	Psy.Lim. Doesn't understand 20th century Vey Common Irrational
10	Vulnerability: 2x Stun from Magic
5	Vuln. 1 1/2 x Body from Magic

230 pts. Total

Characteristics: 126 + Skills: 39 + Powers: 77 = 242

Disadvantages: 230 + Used Ep: 12 = 242

Unused ep: 2

And now for something completely different...Questionnaire data. To begin with I am going to cover a little each issue for a while (both to allow me to stretch this out for a few issues, and to give me time to comment on the stuff I see). For the first installment I am going to write about books. They seem to be a topic that many of us have in common (only one person actually didn't list any book favorites (although even he/she did list some authors). The three categories for now are favorite Science Fiction, Fantasy, and Authors (esses). The following data has been culled from the 14 returned responses. As most people felt that the 'rankings' were very arbitrary I have tabulated results based on how many *people* mentioned the book/person in question.

	Science Fiction	Fantasy	Writers
1	Dune-8	Hobbit/LotR-11	JRR Tolkien-8
2	Neuromancer-4	Fafhrd/Mouser-4	Larry Niven-5
3	Wild Cards-4	Earthsea Tril.-4	R. Heinlein-5
4	Canticle/Leibowitz-3	A.Rice Vampire-4	UK Le Guin-4
5	Lucifer's Hammer-3	Amber Chron.-3	D. Adams-3
6	Ringworld-3	Belgariad-3	L.Alexander-3
7	EarthClan (Brin)-3	Deryni-3	CS Lewis-3
8		Dragonlance-3	HP Lovecraft-3
9		Elric-3	Piers Anthony-3
10		Xanth-3	

SF Honorable mention: Dream Park Tales of Known Space
Foundation Ender's Game Left Hand of Darkness
Starship Troopers Darkover
Fantasy Hon. mention: Dark is Rising Merlin (Mary Stewart)
Moonheart Myth Adventures Dragon and the George
Shanarra Chronicles Black Company Prydain Chron. Narnia
and of course CONAN

Author's......Way too many.

There are several interpretations that one could make of the above listings. First of all there is the "it's all hogwash" attitude, which I shall avoid as useless. Then there is "Hmmm." Why is it that the man who wrote the most commonly listed SF book (Frank Herbert) only made one person's favorite author list, while the LotR/Hobbit's Tolkien got top placement in both Fantasy and authors. Could it be that most of us remember Dune as a particularly interesting novel, which was followed by some less than savory sequels? Perhaps Piers Anthony fared better (even though he does continue series a few books too far), because he has more series that start enjoyably....not to mention being lighter and cheerier reading? And while I am thinking of series, why are all the favorites in Fantasy series?? Are we part of the reason that movie-makers keep doing sequels? And do you wish to hazard a guess as to why our Science Fiction choices aren't all series (Damn close I admit, but not all of 'em.)

As for myself, I was hoping for more suprises, but I guess most of us do have a fair bit in common. There were some I have not read in all 3 lists...Neuromancer, Anne Rice's Vampire books, Belgariad, L.Alexander, and only one I had read (at least attempted) without enjoying (Lovecraft).

To give a bit more than just books I will amend last issues Elvis count.
The vote is now... NO-7 Please God NO-1 No + never did-1
Yes/No-1 Always in our Hearts-1 Silly-1 YES-1
and Tired of the Elvis Shit-1.

As for Aliens...... Yes-5 You Bet-1 YES! Especially the French -1
Yes (Illegal)-1 Silly-1 Maybe-3 No Comment-1
See Movies-1 (this entity had Alien/Aliens as their #1 movie)

For the next few pages I am going to give a bit of background for a city I worked on for the last few months of my gaming days (and which I am contemplating working on again. The city is on a Monty Hall world setting I suppose, but I planned to use it for tough characters who were ready to retire, but if they were lucky still have things happen to them. Maybe this is my wish fulfillment city to live in, though many people would probably say it is too dangerous to want that....

World Profile...perhaps a bit of useful info

Basically AD&D (with the usual and some unusual modifications.) It is after what we would call Ragnarrok, although there were some unexpected variations. First, it seems the Norns (and/or the Fates) were wrong in their predictions of who would die and would live. Among the changes are Odin's and Thor's survival while they had not foreseen at the suprise demise of every gnome and Gnome deity. The calender has been redone, starting with the years after the big R. The present year is 6654. There are prophesies that in 6666 Nyarlothotep shall return, once again to herald the end of life and so on. His return would be the third (in 66 and 666 he came and was stopped by large groups of powerful characters). The various planes still exist, though many layers of the Abyss were severed from the chain-like shape they had previously been thought to look like. Many new gods have risen, some demons grew to even higher status and gods died. The world itself was changed and as yet there are no complete maps (no, not even I have one yet). Noone has been able to find another continent and return to tell of it. Most civilization is well inland of the seas that are now populated more heavily than ever before...with sea-monsters. The people are mostly descendants of the AD&D type survivors, but the big R was so awesome in scope that there are many people and items from other eras. So there are people with stuff like pistols and even a laser or two, but they are few and far between. In addition there are Gamma World type creatures. All in all it is an "Adventurer's" type of place. Thanks to the 6000+ years there is also enough civilization for cities for those whose idea of fun is city-life or politics (or whatever you'd call it).

City Profile........MARD

Mard was founded appoximately 65 years ago. It was named for the NG Lord Mard, a fighter of considerable ability. Having attained a 'modicum' of wealth for the King of Orgith, he was given authority/ permission/orders to clear this area of monstersand establish a frontier town. Mard hired several low-level adventurers to help him clear the land, and several more to guard the Dwarven builders, and human farmers and etc. In the first years, people with dreams (i.e. those willing to take risks) moved to the growing village. Many came to settle, ready to retire, but not willing to live in the more 'civilized' cities. Thus the central part of town came to be inhabited by wealthy ex-adventurers and merchants. Unfortunately Mard himself did not live to see the city. Mard, and most of his party were slain by a pair of mated Ancient Red Dragons and their youthful child. Only the child lived, swearing vengeance (the trio all had the power of speech, and both parents cast several spells before dying) upon those few who lived and all their descendants. The dragon has not been seen since (although something large and flying has been sited in recent months), but Tilask Ellesing (a retired Elf from Mard's party who has lived in the city since its founding) does not allow the town to forget. In fact that is the reason he has remained on the Council of Seven since it became The political authority in Mard.

The city's first 20 years were marked with uncounted deaths. Several hundred middle-level adventurers came and went (carried out on their shields, as it were). The nearby terrain seemed to be heavily inhabited by monsters of all sorts, partly because the ground was so very fertile (for both food and magic). The town was attacked often by such killers as Orcs, Goblins, and Hobgoblins. On rarer occasions the town received the dubious honor of hosting raids by bugbears, trolls and Giants. Fortunately the Dwarves built well and the city never quite fell. Most of ther Dwarf clan moved away in 6625, feeling it was not their fight, but a few stayed to fight (& to die). Every decade or two a couple of dwarves return to perform routine maintenance (and make some money), presently the pair are Blaftone and Dracon. Those first 20 years also saw the war with the Kirnoan Alliance of Non-Humans (and some evil humans..). This war crushed most of Orgith. Mard survived for two major reasons. One was the fact that the Kirnoan lands were on the opposite side of Orgith from Mard, and two...the very high concentration of levelled individuals. Although Mard repelled the evil hordes from their walls, Orgith was lost. In the years after the initial fall, the refugees from fallen towns huddled around the safety of Mard. Thanks to the fertile soil the people were able to live without warring with the inhabitants, and were granted small parcels of land that did not infringe on the 'natives'.

The next 40 years became a time of expansion. The city grew in all directions. Several parties of refugees and their children retook other small villages that had been lost. But the royal line of Orgith was lost, so there was no unifying force, with the exception of the Kirnoan foe, which had seriously over-extended itself. So Orgith did not become a nation again. The area is a collection of free cities, bonded only by non-aggression pacts and fear of the Kirnoans. In the past year there has even been talk of peace with the Kirnoans...at least there has been trade with the braver elements of both societies.

Mard still has a centralized society, the richer, more powerful, and influential citizens living near the Stronghold, while the poorer citizens are ringed beyond. Mard is ruled by Lord Omeric (a 59 year old fighter of very high level...15+......17 I think, but that notebook is packed away at present so I cannot check) who is Neutral and rules justly. He has kept the Council of Seven formed by his predecessor, which gives advice and makes laws he ratifies or vetoes. They meet each week to discuss current events and policies. Any decision they make can be vetoed by Omeric, unless they decided unanimously. Of the Council I have made three members so far. Zargon (retired fighter and owner of the Adventurer's General Store), Tilask Ellesing (retired Elven Thief and one of the city founders), and Carlo D'Lotto (wealthy casino owner/moneylender rumored to be a vicious loanshark mafioso type).

Some of MARD's People and Laws

Mard is a city of many races. Humans, Elves, Dwarves, Halflings, Half-Orcs and Elves have no problem living here. Although individuals may brawl occasionally, none have dared to cause serious racial strife. In addition to the 'normal' races, a few 'non-humans' have attained citizenship. Foremost of these is Nirab, a Bugbear Lord who owns a tavern (The Bugbear's Brew) and is known to have been forcefully changed to Chaotic Neutral before he arrived. Another unusual citizen is Dernig the Insane, a Winged Folk suffering from Agoraphobia. Occasionally a lone Orc may be allowed in the city to trade (for a small fee, and with continual guarding). Non-humans of a more diverse degree are allowed in to fight in the Arena. More often non-humans of all sorts will sneak into the city with less respectable goals. They are often caught and 'given' to the Arena for use on slow days. As for the citizens, the city is safe (relative to other cities), but the lower classes are not welcome to the centralized zone of wealth without reason. The guards will harrass such people for only a short time, to see if they want entrance or are truly in need of a swift kick to the rear (which they are happy to provide). The major exception to this is the farmers of the area, who are treated with at least as much respect as the middle class merchants.

Thievery is illegal, but the first time offense does not carry too strict a penalty, so theives do roam and get enough skill to avoid detection and capture. Harlotry is common and taxable. Harlots are registered and are checked by any of the assorted Doctors/Clerics in town. They are not allowed to solicit in any place of business without the proprietor's permission, which is usually easily gotten for a small monetary sum. Alcohol is not restrained, but youths under fifteen are not allowed in most Taverns unless accompanied by an adult (as they tend to annoy adults and they may not be prepared for the less savory side of society). This law is not strictly enforced (except for a few days after the occasional incident that for some reason includes a child). Since the city is inhabited largely by adventurers (centrally at least) the carrying of weapons and wearing of armor is not against the law. Some merchants feel ill at ease, and have signs proclaiming 'NO WEAPONS' on the outer door, which means nothing larger than a dagger. Few citizens disregard such signs, as the Council of 7 approved a 10 gp fine for flagrant disregard of the signs (6 of which goes to the merchant, and 4 to the city's treasury). On the other hand, use of weapons for the gaining of 'gifts', murder etc. can hold severe penalties, all depending on the circumstances. Self-Defense is the most commonly used, and unless there are witnesses to the contrary it works almost invariably. The city is policed by three groups, The Black Dragons (the Stronghold Guards), and The Screaming Eagles (a society of Lawful Magic-Users all of whom have some way to fly and an un-understood desire to serve the city) The City Guard (your usual city troops). These Law enforcers (not all of whom are lawful) may apprehend for any crime, and then they bring criminals to one of the city's 4 judges (three of whom are appointed by Lord Omeric for terms of 3 years staggered so that one is replaced each year... on the 20th day of the 5th month). The fourth judge has been given a lifelong commission. All four get 30gp/month salary (and a 5gp raise if they distinguish themselves enough to be named for a successive term). All four can pass judgement on their own, but in an unusual case they will call a convocation, gathering all four to decide together. If they reach a deadlock, or feel they have no right to pass sentence, Lord Omeric and the Council of 7 hear the case. If Omeric has a definite sentence, he'll pass it, otherwise the council suggests one, and he okays or vetoes it. Many sentences involve fighting in the Arena for a period of days or weeks.

Among the more interesting places in Mard (oh yeah, I realized later I had already reduced the name to something acceptable, so no contest there), are The Adventurer's General Store (all the basic equipment and

—THE "UNLUCKY" PAGE—

then some), Bowman's Bliss (run by the best bowyer fletcher in more than 100 miles), The Iron Boar Inn, Staggersack (cheap flophouse), StormTower (suddenly appeared on a stormy night in 6620, over 100 yards tall, and seeming perch of some large winged beast.....still not fully investigated), The Bathhouse of Megros, The BugBear's Brew, DoomShack (another mystery...this one appeared in 6647...none who enter have ever returned!!), The Arena, and The Tower of Temptation (where many of the cities most.....talented women .....work). There are others and more details, but I shall save them for next time.

Some Words About The Castle of Death

BIG....Horrifying....Treasure laden....monster infested....the culmination of my first 2 or 3 years of gaming....sometimes not predictable....occasionally very predictable....Fun (at the time at least) and so on

When I first learned about gaming during the 10th grade (fall1980) I started gaming with my brother, Wayne Peacock and John Godfrey. The first year or so was exclusively us and then we met other gamers and expanded our horizons and so forth. But the beginning was our epic adventure which became known as The Castle of Death Party. Each of the 3 players started with 3 characters (yes the 3rd was somewhat less well defined than the other two). When they were starting their city was destroyed by some evil being they knew only as Mog, the Black-Boned One. Around the time they had reached 10th level they learned Mog was also called Lord Phyffe....a Lich of vast powers. In fact...the Gods (from multiple mythos) entreated them to avenge their city, gain divine favor, power and wealth for themselves and destroy Phyffe. They were able to gain very artifact-like weapons and were given the ability to raise level when they had enough experience merely by sacrificing a good bit of treasure (which was no problem in the castle). So they went to face the foe, and to slay every living soldier of the evil ruler of the Castle. There were 2 levels above the huge cliff it was built on, and 9 sub-levels (numbered 1-8 with a 5a and 5b, as I recall). Hundreds of Orcs (some with the equivalent of two or four levels) and Goblins and so on. Giants by the dozens. Dragons, Demons, Golems, Gods (Surtur being foremost in my immediate memory) and a plethora of others. I cannot decide if I should actually show the extent to which I had mapped the rooms and named the Orcs and so on, but I will try to give a synopsis of the levels next time and more if people express any interest in the details. By the way, Phyffe was a 'mutant', with two heads....and was 38th/38th Magic-User/Cleric!!

GODS AND SUCH A WORD SEARCH G=GREEK ETC

S	A	M	D	A	S	O	N	O	R	H	C	A	S	H
O	F	I	S	T	H	T	S	P	Y	N	B	E	U	A
P	W	N	K	R	E	I	M	C	C	O	Y	L	J	D
A	R	E	H	O	E	S	E	H	T	I	K	O	L	E
R	A	R	A	H	O	T	U	H	E	R	M	E	S	S
I	X	V	N	T	G	E	A	R	E	O	Z	E	U	A
O	L	A	U	L	L	E	R	C	D	W	R	R	S	L
C	L	L	K	L	D	M	H	I	E	E	O	S	Y	T
H	P	L	K	A	C	A	N	B	C	H	R	U	N	A
C	L	E	O	P	T	A	N	R	U	W	V	A	O	M
S	T	A	R	P	E	G	N	A	R	T	E	M	I	S
E	V	N	E	S	A	E	M	R	O	L	N	O	D	L
S	A	C	I	E	E	N	A	D	I	P	U	C	A	T
U	U	O	H	K	H	U	R	A	N	U	S	T	R	Y
M	O	R	P	H	E	U	S	O	M	N	U	S	T	R

Lord of Light
WISDOM (R)
THIEVES (G)
The Forge (R)
QUEEN (G)
THE DEAD (G + R)
The HEAVENS (R)
KING (FINNISH)
KING (MELNI.)
KING (N)
WINTER (N)
DRINK (R)
VENGEANCE (E)
SLEEP (R)
DREAMS (R)
VICTORY (R)
ONE OF ZEUS' AUNTS (R)
WAR (R)
THE MAIN SATYR
MOON (G)

TIME (R)
THUNDER (N)
SKY-HOLDING (G)
SUN (G)
BEAUTY (R)
MAGIC (G)
LOVE + ARROWS (G)
AGRICULTURE (G)
MISCHIEF (N)

JUSTICE (N)
EVIL (E)

HE WHO WAS BORN OF THE PISS OF SOME GODS/A HUNTER

SLEW MEDUSA/ A SON OF ZEUS

THE NINE CONSUMMATE ARTISTS (R)

GAMMA RAYS (SO I THREW A COMIC IN....)

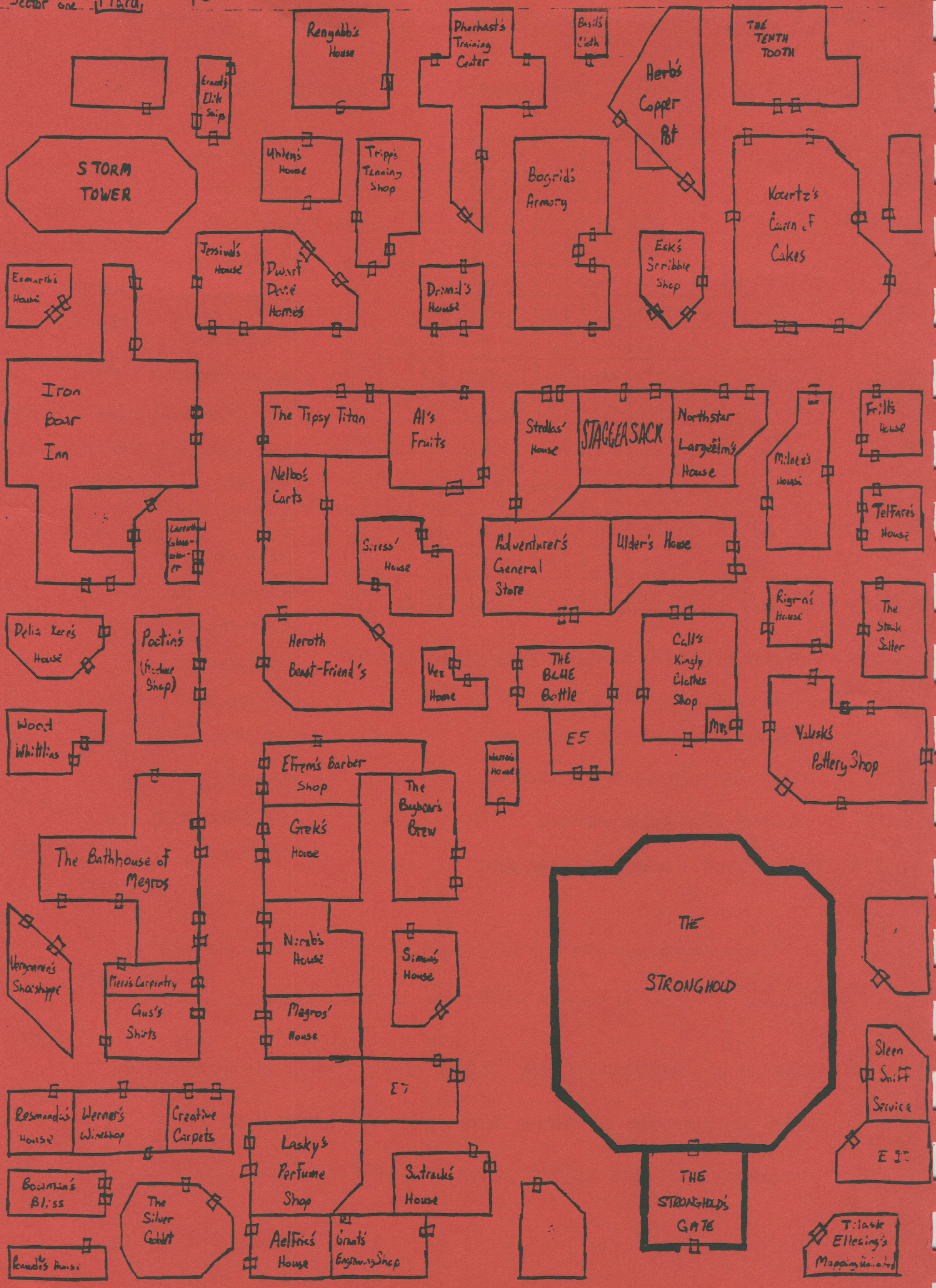
DRUNKS (VIA.....ANDY GRIFFITH)

PTAH FEDERATION MEDICINE

SORRY DEENA BUT I DID NOT HAVE MORE TIME TO MAKE THIS MORE OF A Challenge but I have to hurry to KINKO's and get this printed....

Next Issue ....WHO KNOWS! More of the Castle of Death.. More of the city of Mard...Why Yorikk's world was not destroyed by tidal waves when the MOON stayed still!!!

Sector one Mard, TO WHET YOUR TASTE----


Renyabb's House
Phorhast's Training Center
Basil's Cloth
Herb's Copper Pot
THE TENTH TOOTH
Erandi's Elite Ships
STORM TOWER
Uhlen's House
Tripp's Tanning Shop
Bogrid's Armory
Koertz's Cairn of Cakes
Jessiva's House
Dwarf Dale Homes
Exmarth's House
Drimal's House
Esk's Scribble Shop
Iron Boar Inn
The Tipsy Titan
Al's Fruits
Stedlas' House
STAGGERASACK
Northstar Largeelm's House
Milaex's House
Frilt's House
Nelbo's Carts
Larenthal Glass-blower
Siress' House
Adventurer's General Store
Ulder's House
Telfare's House
Delia Kee's House
Poctin's (Produce Shop)
Heroth Beast-Friend's
Vex Home
THE BLUE Bottle
Call's Kingly Clothes Shop
Mrs
Rigrin's House
The Steak Salter
Wood Whittling
E5
Warren's House
Valesk's Pottery Shop
Efrem's Barber Shop
The Bugbear's Brew
Grek's House
The Bathhouse of Megros
Nirab's House
Simon's House
THE STRONGHOLD
Vergenne's Shoeshoppe
Piers's Carpentry
Gus's Shirts
Magros' House
Sleen Sniff Service
E7
Resmandi's House
Werner's Wineshop
Creative Carpets
Lasky's Perfume Shop
Sutrack's House
THE STRONGHOLD'S GATE
E 12
Bowman's Bliss
The Silver Goblet
Aelfric's House
Grant's Engraving Shop
Tilask Ellesing's Mapping Unlimited
Ravendi's House

Fishy Bits

Kevin Ingle 🐸 2820 Westfield Road, Charlotte, NC 28209
Sonia Handforth-Kome 🦀

Oh Lawsy, Lawsy, Lawsy. It done got out of hand!

Sorry folks, but this issue is not going to be completely different after all, mainly because we found the gaming group here in Charlotte, they played nothing but Cyberpunk and Battletech (take me now, Lord!) and NO WAY am I going to survive on that kind of gaming diet. 🐸 couldn't either. So..... 🐸 volunteered to run the game I sketched in issue Two of Motive. 🐸 neglected to "just say no" when enough people asked to play. Actually, 🐸 neglected to say "no" at anytime (although, to give him credit, he did say "maybe" a few times, and "can you wait until I kill someone?" several times), resulting in another epic two Keeper game, and a dizzying number and variety of characters to try to fit logically into the game (picture a distraught woman grasping her head and shaking violently back and forth as her partner agrees to allow TWO MORE PEOPLE to play).

Anyway, the game worked out ...interestingly... despite the somewhat unusual and chaotic circumstances. It is quite popular, and not Cyberpunk or Battletech. As it is a reasonably good example of a long-term Cthulhu game, I am going to include our game notes and synopsis of the game to date in this issue of Motive. (Actually, the real reason is that I already had most of the stupid thing typed out, since we can't keep up with everything going on unless I keep detailed notes of what each of us did, and what happened each game, which I then force 🐸 to read.)

It was interesting for me to see what happens to a game that is only run for 2-3 hours at a time, and has such rapidly changing cast members. The original murder mystery plot was lost almost immediately; 🐸 and I spent a lot of time tying in details that one or the other of us had to improvise as our players departed in radically different directions, both from each other, and from any semblance of plot that we had previously created. Actually, the chaos was not as great as it could have been, and many of the players have been excellent role-players who seem to be having a great deal of fun. However, I would not recommend this particular approach to game running or game playing. Developing 2.5 hour episodes with occasionally random players while trying to maintain a basic plot reminds me a lot of what I imagine television sitcom writers must go through. So far, (August 9) 15 players have participated in this game at various times. Only Grey (Scott) has been in the game from the start, although Geoffrey (Kevin #2), and Nigel's player (Adam) have both been in the game since the second night.

Surprisingly, having two Keepers did not add to the chaos. 🐸 and I were able to handle the size of our group (never more than 8 at once), and the group's habit of frequently splitting up, very effectively. No one had to wait for long to do something that they wanted to do, and the party had to roleplay more amongst themselves in order to share information that they had gained in their individual forays. In fact, much of this game is not recorded, since I did not hear most of the interactions between the players. I know Towers did a lot of strong arming with the individual PCs - Geoffrey and Nigel in particular were adverse to being pushed around by "that Government asshole" and I caught snatches of very amusing byplay between them and Towers. Grey spent awhile being paranoid, and the PC's played this out amongst themselves without any help at all from the Keeper. 🐸 and I would return from a Keeper conference to find that the game had continued without us - the characters interacting and reacting with and to each other, sharing information, opinions, and rampant paranoia.

In general, this game has been fun to run, albeit very stressful to me, given my preference for intricate and logical plot detail. We have already worked out some of the detail for a campaign in Egypt, however, from recent conversation amongst the party, it looks like our next stop may be Rome or Spain, although at least one vote was cast for Duke University, and someone wants to go to the Caribbean.

Sigh.

At any rate, without further ado, Here it is:

"BENEATH THE WAVES"... the continuing saga of a family who've gone to the frogs....

Time: Present (June 24)

Setting: Start on Ocracoke (NC Outer Banks)

During WWII, **Captain Dr. James O'Neil** was with the British 8th Army in Cairo and Alexandria, Egypt. His medical unit was cut off from their supply line several times, and James decided that he would try to make use of the local medicines as much as possible, thus reducing the unit's dependence on uncertain imported supplies. To this end, while in Egypt he worked with a supply sergeant to find an alternate source of medicines- they went on a fact-finding mission to Cairo. James met **Achmed Al Hamid**, a self-proclaimed "magician". Achmed agreed to teach James about the properties of local plants and drugs, along with the chants and spells necessary to make them efficacious. In return, James had to swear that he would never reveal either his source of information, or any of the recipes or spells he was taught. James did swear this oath, and the medicines he was able to produce worked wonders for the wounded men under his care. He never really believed there was magic involved, but he did use the appropriate chants and spells whenever he prepared his mixtures, just in case.

After he retired from the army, he settled down on Ocracoke Island and continued his Egyptian studies, importing such supplies as he needed from Cairo through contacts he had made during the war. He developed particular interest in alkaloids, which can be used to heal or kill, and are widely varied as to type, origin, effect and detectability. He was able to fund his hobby firstly with money he made during the war by various ventures, and later with money left to him by his rich wife, who died in an auto accident when his two daughters were still very young. James has two daughters, Ellen (20, birthday on July 23) and Elizabeth (19, birthday on November 2) O'Neil. The terms of the will left him $100,000, along with control of two $1,000,000 trust funds; one for each of his daughters, which will go to the girls on their respective 21st birthdays. Until that time, James has legal right to withdraw such monies from the funds as he deems necessary for the girl's education and well-being.

1990: James has prepared a book for publication that chronicles how he first came to study the subject of Egyptian herbology, and goes on to list the various recipes and spells he has learned or discovered over the last 47 years. The book describes the effects of the various drugs or potions very specifically. It is James' Magnum Opus - a complete description of everything he has learned. He has by this time practically discounted the oath he made, although he still is not completely sure that there is absolutely no magic involved: some of the drugs do not work if they are not prepared correctly by using an incantation.

The O'Neil Residence is on Ocracoke Island on the Outer Banks of North Carolina, a single-story, three bedroom beach house, up on 2 feet tall stilts, with a study -lab built behind the house. The lab is divided between a library area with collected works on medicine, herbs, natural medicines, and other related topics and a work area, with beakers, retorts and Bunsen burners, etc.

James is an older man, around 65 years of age. He is slightly eccentric, but very gentle. He has a habit of peering at things, squinting slightly as if he can't see well. He believes that Ellen's murder is his fault, and he is fearful for the life of his other daughter. He wants her protected at all times to ensure her safety. June 22, he returned from a two week sailing trip to find his older daughter Ellen dead by the liquor cabinet. There was a spilled drink by her hand, and an opened, empty bottle of gin on the counter. Ellen was home for the summer from her college.

Elizabeth works as a diver. She has become involved with Cthulhu cultists through her work for Shipwreck Magazine. Although she is not of a very high rank among the cultists, she has lost enough sanity to make her behavior a little odd the the investigators. She acts slightly furtive. She will be almost too helpful to the investigators, overtly claiming that her father is innocent, but actually giving the impression that she thinks he's guilty. She will react defensively to questions about where she was at the time of the murder, but will respond that she was at work as usual. She will not respond well to investigators following her or "protecting" her, but will not insist that they stay away - she will set up a "boat accident" and have the Deep Ones assist her if necessary to divert the investigators from the cults activities.

The murder was committed by Elizabeth, who is working as a diver along the dangerous Diamond Shoals which make up the Graveyard of the Atlantic seaward from Ocracoke and Hatteras Islands. The Cthulhu cult Elizabeth belongs to has enlisted her aid to help them uncover a great hidden treasure that sank with a Spanish galleon in 1499. Although she lives with her father, she spends all of her days, and most of her nights with her friends and co-workers (the cultists). Ellen worked as diver and ship's crew during the summers, and she had asked Elizabeth to help her get work with Elizabeth's people. Elizabeth was happy to help, since she assumed that Ellen would join the glorious cause of the cultists, and when she came of age, would use her money to further their recovery attempts. Ellen was horrified when she found out what Elizabeth was into, and threatened to tell their father everything when he got back from his sailing trip. Also, Ellen planned to publish an expose of the cultist's activities. Elizabeth could not be sure that Ellen had not written anything down, so she killed her in a way that would discredit James, in case Ellen had managed to leave him a letter. Also, Elizabeth wanted to be sure that any investigation that took place would look in a direction completely away from the cultists. She assumed that the scandal of a murder for money would divert everyone's attention away from any cult activity.

Elizabeth got Ellen to take the drink as a sort of peace offering: "All right, calm down Ellen; here, drink this, you need it; look- it's not as bad as you're making out! These are decent people.... Oh gee, look. She's dead. Idiot." Elizabeth made sure that there was enough gin in the glass, and enough poison in the gin to make analysis easy. She knew that her father would not be home until the next day, and she didn't want the evidence to evaporate. She poured out the rest of the gin so the bottle would be empty.

Ellen was a very tidy girl, studying journalism at UNC-CH. Her room at home will have pictures of college roommates and friends tucked in around the dresser mirror, a neatly made bed, and some neatly stacked notebooks full of class notes and project ideas. Her car, which is parked somewhat haphazardly outside the house, has her wet suit and diving gear tossed in the back, and a notebook flung out of sight under the front passenger seat. The notebook contains sketchy notes of her summer so far, including that she got a job, with whom, and when she started work. Also in the notebook is an entry "Spanish galleon?"

Sheriff Tate: he firmly believes that James is guilty. He is handling this case because it is the first murder case in 10 years. He will list Motive, Method and Opportunity if questioned about his belief - **Motive**: her birthday was one month away, at which time he would lose control of her very large trust fund. **Method**: a rare poison was found in the gin left in the glass. The poison was identified as one of those James kept in his laboratory. **Opportunity**: Ellen had been home for several weeks, and during that time had made herself several gin and tonics, which she proclaimed were her new "drink of choice". When she decided not to go on the sailing trip with her father in order to look for work, all he had to do was poison the gin. She would undoubtedly have a drink before he returned, and since there was only enough gin left for one drink, and the poison used evaporated with the alcohol out of the bottle (and, in theory, the glass), there would have been no evidence of poisoning when he returned. The poison was a vegetable derivative, acting like curare: extremely difficult to detect in the body, and acting to induce a heart attack. If the daughter had drunk the whole drink before dying, no trace of the poison would have been found in the glass. Even if poison was suspected, it would not have been detected in the body.

James did not commit the murder. He thinks the murder was committed to keep him from publishing a book of findings from his research.

Nosy Neighbor Sarrie: she can't get out much any more, so she spends a lot of time just watchin' people. Yes, it seemed like Ellen was going out diving a lot - she started carrying her divin' gear out every morning about two weeks after she came home for the summer. Now let me see...yep, that was about a while after her daddy left on that boat trip. Both them two sisters were doin' a lot of divin'. Seemed like Beth was around more than she had been for the last few months. Terrible thing Ellen dyin' like that. Can't imagine what caused it. Not Mr. O'Neil, no sir. He was the quietest thing, wouldn't hurt a fly. Why you know, he was a Doctor during the war. No sir, not Mr. O'Neil. No, didn't see nothin' unusual really. Both girls came home earlier than they had been, one day, tho'... come to think of it, they both seemed upset... Bethie went back out again. Can't remember exactly what day that was. All days pretty much the same now...

Coast Guard Captain Carruthers: he is a busy man, but he will take the time to answer your questions. There is a group of folks "treasure hunting" off the shoals. He thinks it is a bad idea, very dangerous waters. He has a cutter check on them every day, and he has made sure that their license is real. They say they are doing a series of article about the wrecked ships off the coast of NC. Ha! good luck to them. There are a lot of ships sunk off those shoals.

Ocracoke Police officer Carl "Toad" Teeter: he has known James O'Neil since he moved to the island. Toad simply can not believe that James murdered anyone, let alone his lovely daughter. He'd be more than willing to join in the investigation, even if it isn't his case. Toad talks with the distinctive island accent, and is a repository of old tales and legends of the Outer Banks. His uncle is **Jonathan Teeter** - the fellow who wrote those books about "Strange Sightings off the Outer Banks" and "Ghost Ships of the Outer Banks". Uncle Jonathan actually saw one of the Creatures From The Depths once. He's dead now: boating accident. Drowned off the South Point in the late 60's. Body was never recovered, but the wreckage of his fishing boat washed up on shore. Funny thing that...there hadn't been a storm that day. Must have been a freak accident. Toad is a good guy, but not too bright.

The "Sunken Mariner" Captain and crew: They are all Cthulhu cultists, searching for the lost Spanish ship and the key.

The "Treasure" Captain and crew: These are actually genuine magazine folks, they are not cultists, and they do not know that their sister ship is involved in anything unusual.

The divers: most of the 10 divers were hired locally. The divers are all involved with the cult, but work in shifts for both the "Treasure" and the "Sunken Mariner".

The treasure for which Elizabeth and the cult are so avidly searching is a single chest, sealed with Elder Signs, which was being transported in utter secrecy by order of Inquisitor-General Diego de Deza to the recently discovered New World. Deza had discovered that Torquemada was using the Spanish Inquisition to collect sacred and magical items. One of the items was so powerful that Torquemada became frightened, and sealed it into the chest, intending to hide it away where no one could find it. The effort of creating the Elder Signs killed the 78 year old man before he could complete this mission and hide the chest. His dying request was that the chest be taken somewhere that no man could find it, but did not specify what was in the chest. His last wish was respected by Deza, who was frightened by anything that would frighten Torquemada. The ship encountered a storm off the coast of Ocracoke, ripped out her bottom on the shoals, and sank with all hands. Deza kept a private record that the ship had sailed with a "powerful talisman of evil aboard her", although he did not specifically state what the "talisman" was.

There is a colony of Deep Ones in the shoals around the Outer Banks. Deep Ones are an amphibious marine race that serve Cthulhu. They are immortal, and can breed with humans, producing immortal offspring. The offspring of a Deep One - human mating appears human as a child, gets uglier as it gets older, and at 1D20 + 20 years undergoes a rapid transformation into a Deep One. Humans with a lesser taint of Deep One blood transform at a later age, or to a lesser degree.

They cannot approach the chest, but they can locate the approximate resting spot under centuries of sand and sunken ships, because of the Elder Signs used to seal the chest. The cultists also have possession of Deza's private journal, some of Torquemada's private journal entries as well as a document left by one of Torquemada's Inquisition victims.

James' Murder:
The guards dinner has been drugged with a short-term soporific; James' dinner was not drugged. The assassin picked the lock into the jail house, used the guard's key to open the general jail, and then James' cell, and surprised James in his bed, strangling and hanging him with his own shirt before he could call out. The assassin then locked everything back up, returned the keys to the guard's belt, closed and relocked the front door, and left.

The Egyptian who killed James did so because the publicity about Ellen alerted them to his book plans. His house will be searched for his copy of the book (which is in a safe deposit box at the bank), and the publishers will experience a theft of manuscript, although this last fact won't be known right away. The publishers will want to rush the book's publication in order to cash in on the publicity surrounding James' imprisonment / death. They know of his misgivings about the book - he jokingly told his publisher, John Parker, about his promise of secrecy

Magic Items / Books:

The chest is sealed with an Elder Sign. The item within the chest looks like a sacrificial dagger. It has an octopus-like creature on one side of the hilt, a black lotus on the other, and runes carved down both sides of the blade. The key is enormously dense - although it is only 5" long, roughly 3/4" wide and 1/4" thick, it weights nearly 50 pounds. The dagger is impervious to most damage; it can't be scratched, melted, bent, have holes burned in it by a laser beam, etc. This dagger is actually the key to unlock the "vast black door" of sunken R'lyeh. This would give the cultists access to the city in which Cthulhu slumbers. If the party succeeds in obtaining this item, they will be pursued by every Cthulhu-worshipping cultist, plus any other cultists who can sense the power of the object. If the party doesn't obtain the key, the cultists will continue salvage operations until the key is recovered. Deep Ones will instantly obey whoever holds the key, although they will not act contrary to their nature. To look at the dagger will cause 1D6 SAN loss if a character misses his SAN roll, 1 point of SAN loss regardless. When the key is touched, a POW vs. POW roll must be made between the POW of the toucher and the POW of the key (21). If the roll succeeds, the toucher can make a roll to increase his/her POW. If the roll FAILS....the toucher loses 1D10 SAN, 1D3 POW. This POW loss is not permanent. If the character so affected does not come into contact with the key for 24 hours, his/her POW will be restored in full. Until that time, the character defends against POW rolls at his/her reduced POW. The specific insanity that afflicts the character is the compulsion (growing to obsession) to keep the key with him/her at all times. If the character lets go of the key for any reason, the next time the key is touched, a POW vs. POW roll must be made again. If the character does not relinquish hold on the key, a POW vs. POW roll must be made by the character every 4 hours, with results as above. When the character's POW or SAN reaches 0, that character has been wholly taken over by the key, and is no longer a PC. When the key is not in physical contact with anyone, it still radiates a compulsion to grasp it. This compulsion is not strong enough to affect a strong conscious mind, but if a character or characters sleep with the key in the same room, a POW vs. POW roll must be made to determine whether or not the sleeping character(s) will sleepwalk to the key and pick it up.
The key can be destroyed by dropping it into a sun, or into a black hole.

"Ghost Ships of the Atlantic", "Strange Sighting off the Outer Banks": both these books were written and published in the 1960's by Jonathan Teeter. "Ghost Ships" was published first, in 1963, and "Strange Sightings" was published just three months before Jonathan's death in 1967. Jonathan gave the first copy of his second book to Charlie Teeter, his brother, with **an inscription: "Charlie - I actually saw one! - Jonathan".** Charlie donated the book to the library after Jonathan's death. The books contain descriptions of various ghost stories common to the Outer Banks. **In "Ghost Ships"** there are several stories about ships that are found, or that sail into harbor, without anyone aboard. The ships seem to be intact, just deserted, as if something took everyone off, but left the ship alone. There are also stories about ships that have been sighted sailing off the coast 100 years after they sank.

In "Strange Sightings" there are some ghost ship stories, but the book seems to be mostly dedicated to creature sightings, like the Grey Man of Pawney, and the devil in Kill Devil Hills. There are ghost stories about sailors who disappeared during storms, and whose ghosts returned, sometimes horribly changed, to their homes or their ships'. In these cases, the ghosts almost always had some reason for returning - some girlfriend to visit or possession to regain. In this book, there is also a description for a frog-like Creature From The Depths, which supposedly will help sailors whom it likes, and cause shipwrecks for those whom it has taken enmity to. There are legends which state that to appease the Creature, blood must be thrown on the water. Other legends state that if a woman is on board ship, the Creature will come aboard to get her. This is why sailors considered it to be unlucky to have a woman aboard.

"The Carib Indians; Their Lives and Beliefs": This book contains lore on the Carib Indians, who were exterminated by 1560 or so by Spanish Settlers who didn't like cannibalistic, demoniacal, magic worshiping heathens as neighbors. The book describes the Indians belief that blood is power, and that the sea is power as well. (After all, blood and seawater are almost the same thing.)

Deza's Journal contains discussions about why the Inquisition is being held, observations about the politics of the times, observations about his colleagues, and some entries about day to day happenings. The journal begins in 1497, and partway into the journal (late 1498) is an entry about the death of Torquemada, and a strange request that was made of Deza. Torquemada had been quite insistent, and had sent a note secretly to Deza, with the request that he burn it afterwards, which Deza did. He secretly commissioned the requested ship, put the item in question aboard and launched the ship for the new world with a skeleton crew in February, 1499.

There is no further mention in the journal of Torquemada, or of anything out of the ordinary. The journal is a wonderful historical document which follows the everyday functioning of the Inquisition and the political climate of Spain and other countries during the early 1500's. Mention is made of the religious treasures (icons, false idols, jeweled daggers, etc.) seized in the name of the Church, and notes disposition of some of these items. Usually they were converted into money, sometimes, for the more unusual items, they were sent to Rome for safe-keeping.

The pages from Torquemada's journal: These pages were obviously removed from a much larger document. Translated, they read:

.....went well today. There were several items acquired of unusual nature. I will study the texts that have been seized, in order to understand more fully the nature of this threat to Our Holy Lord, The Almighty God. The perversion of the subjects today was startling, most unlike the poor misguided souls that usually we must lead into the Light.

June 15,1498

The Inquisition is progressing well. We are cleansing the running sores of corruption and heresy that threaten the immortal souls of our Brethren, our Children. This week a coven was located, and their Black Bible was confiscated. Also, a desecrated golden cross was taken, and several idols of the Dark One. These items were disposed of as usual.

In my studies of the Black texts seized last week, I find that they are unlike most of the the texts we encounter. They are dark and evil, and seem to fill the imagination with terror, the mind with horror beyond any previously encountered. Surely, here is the heart of Evil. I have read only one other such blasphemous book, long ago when I determined to use the Inquisition to cleanse the world of such filth, to protect the souls of the sheep who follow the One True Lord to the best of my poor ability, to show the path of the Righteous to the corrupt and heathen world. These books are heresy, worse than heresy; teaching of Elder Gods and Black Power, creatures, demons who can be summoned to do the will of man. The dagger taken last week with the texts seems to radiate Evil power. I can feel the seduction of the Evil One, of Ancient hate and Blackness when I hold the dagger. The texts say it is a key, a key to unlock a Devil whose Evil will devour Life, consume Souls, an Obscenity which now slumbers Beneath the Waves. I must not allow this to happen. These creatures described are The Almighty Lord's antagonists from before the Time of Man. I cannot destroy these Objects which I have found during my years as Grand Inquisitor; I have tried, and do not possess the strength. I must continue my efforts to put them away where no one can find them, or use them, or see them, where their corrupting influence can never tempt the Souls of man, nor threaten the Life of the Church.

June 16, 1498

I find that my reading is consuming my days. I find it difficult to concentrate on my Duties, my function as Grand Inquisitor. The politics I must endure seem petty.....

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October 15, 1498

I am ready. I have finished my reading, I know what I must do. I am an old man, my mind reels with obscene images crawling up from the pages of my readings. I hear noises, scratching in the night, I see eyes staring at me from the darkness. I know I will not survive much longer. This Evil must not be allowed to be free in the World. Though it imperils my Immortal Soul, I shall use Evil to bind Evil, and then send it from my world. I have written to Deza, he will carry out my Last Wish. The Unspeakable texts I have sent to Places of safety, where no one can read their blasphemy. One passage alone I have copied here, that passage that will seal the Evil into a cast iron chest, lined with glass, which I have prepared. I have placed the Key into the chest, and will coat the entire chest with lead, into which I shall place the Signs to contain the Evil. This effort, I believe, will kill me. The Lord God take my Soul.

This journal must not be seen by Man. I shall seal it, and send it into the care of the Church, in Rome.

On this page is the spell for the Elder Sign. This spell costs permanently sacrificing 2 POW, but does not cost any SAN. Also on this page is a picture of a dagger, about 5" long, curved toward the end. Down both sides of the blade, runes are carved. The hilt of the dagger has a hideous octopoid creature on one side, and some sort of lotus on the other.

Gain 3% Cthulhu Mythos knowledge for reading this journal in the original Spanish.
Lose no SAN

Note from Torquemada's Inquisition Victim:

This note is written in Spanish. It is a scrap, obviously torn from some larger book or document - the scrap is now laminated to protect it from wetness and decay.

...Ah, the glorious Power! The Old One speaks to me in my dreams...I await my time, when I can be in His Presence. My Change has not yet come, when I Transform to be Beautiful to His Eyes. I am persecuted, but if not me, my Brethren will carry on. The damned Inquisition! They do not understand the Glory, yet they threaten my existence. Ah...for the time when We can unlock the Black Door, when the Key I hold opens the path to the Old Power. So heavy a weight for so small an object. So magnificent a future awaits.....

Study time for this note is 1 day. No Cthulhu Mythos knowledge, no SAN loss.

James' Book:

The book contains an introduction, explaining how James came to be interested in Egyptian herbology, and herbology in general. It goes on to discuss the uses James found during the War for the various drugs he distilled from plants (and to some extent, animals like tree-frogs).

The text is very scholarly-James obviously did extensive and painstaking research on every drug mentioned in the book. However, there is also a sort of "chatty" aspect to the book - James discusses names of people he met, places he visited, and the beliefs of the medicine men he met in "magic"; a belief that he has to confess, has some attraction to him.

He notes the surprising discovery that some of the chants taught to him by his Egyptian friends really do seem to effect the efficacy of the resulting drugs, in a manner which he can not understand. Furthermore, he himself has discovered several variations of the chants that seem to effect specific properties of certain drugs.

There follows a list of chants in Arabic, all fairly similar, except in one or two syllables. Each of these chants are followed by a "recipe" of ingredients necessary to achieve a certain result, and the charting of the efficacy of the resulting drug with and without the inclusion of the chant.

Some of the chants are "stackable", some are not.

Heal Spells: Each of these cost 10 magic points to make one dose. All of them require some "cooking" to combine and concentrate the ingredients.

Stop Bleeding: This salve is made of a plant called Dicentra 2 gram, water 3 cups, and the chant specified for bleeding. One dose will not close a wound, but will cause bleeding to stop from a wound 3"x3". The skin affected will simply stop bleeding, going white, but remaining pliable. The dose is effective for 3 hours, after which time bleeding will resume unless other measures have been taken to prevent further bleeding.

Stop Infection: This powder has different ingredients depending on whether it is to be taken internally or externally, and James has found that certain combinations are more effective against certain types of infections (just as ampicillin is good for bronchitis, but tetracycline is used for acne). However, the basic chant is the same in all cases.

Internally:Arnica and Rattlebox 1 gram each
Externally: Black henbane, 2 gram, tung oil 2 gram
In each case, these medicines must be taken over a period of time. One dose is enough medicine to last 3 days. Bad infections may require 2-3 doses.

Heal Wound: This salve actually speeds up the healing process. The ingredients are Jequirity pea 1 gram, Dicentra 2 gram, and Poinciana, 1 gram. One dose, applied externally to the wound, will heal 1D6 Hit Points. This medicine does not guard against infection.

Inner serenity: This potion can be used to calm and relax a patient, allowing for greater mental clarity on the patient's part, or in slightly larger doses, serving as a preliminary anesthetic. The primary ingredient is that which in its pure form killed Ellen: Lobelia 1 gram. The chant used with this potion is different from the general healing chants, although it costs the same in magic points.

In a pinch, 1.5 gram curare can be substituted for the Lobelia in this medicine. For a muscle relaxant, also include Cestrum 1 gram, and water 1 cup.

For a calming potion, use instead Akee and Amaryllis .5 gram each, Lobelia 1 gram, and 1 cup good French burgundy wine. (Water will work in this potion, but the wine adds efficacy)

For an anesthetic, use Lantana 2 gram as well as the Lobelia 1 gram.

Be careful not to overdose using these medicines. No more than one dose should be taken every 12 hours. If doses are taken consecutively for more than one week (14 doses), roll CON x (5-y) where y is the number of doses over 14 that were taken. If more than one dose is used at a time, roll CON x (5-x), where x is the number of doses greater than one. If either of these CON rolls is missed once, the character becomes comatose. If it is missed more than once, the character dies.

The Inner serenity potions can be taken with any of the other medicines. The prevent infection potion (taken internally) can be used along with the heal wounds salve.

Brew Mead: James has included this entry because he had occasion to use it once during the War, when he could not get any anesthetic. He states that this potion seemed to be very important to Achmed, but he doesn't know why. The effects are unpredictable, the mead goes bad within a week, and it seems to slightly affect the stability of the mind of the patient. It is very effective as an anesthetic, but he thinks that its primary purpose something else: its anesthetic qualities are only a side-effect.

This potion requires Spurge, Jessamine, Jerusalem cherry, Lignum vitae, Pongam, each in quantities of 2 cups, and 1 gallon of water. It takes 8 days to brew, and requires 20 magic points per dose.

1% Cthulhu Mythos Knowledge for reading this book. Study time 2 weeks.

The note in Arabic:

This is a note from Achmed to James. It says:

James, my friend. I know that you are still searching for knowledge, even after all these years. Truly, your discoveries have helped us in our search as well. I am enclosing two new formulae for you. These are different than any that you have used before, and I'm afraid they have little to do with your previous studies. I am sending them because I feel that you are ready to move onto a new field of study. These formulae will help you in your search for knowledge, more than you can imagine.

Before you use these, you must prepare the brew I showed you, the one you used as anesthetic during the great Conflict that lead you to us. I know you have perfected that recipe over the years, as we have used your findings to advance our own knowledge.

Do not be surprised at the result of these most magical chants. Remember to keep your most excellent mind alert and at work, and you will surely achieve a wisdom greater than you hoped for.

Greet my friends for me when they arrive. Remember, they love to bargain.

-Achmed

ENCHANT WHISTLE: This spell requires the physical component of one silver whistle. It requires the blood sacrifice of a small animal, like a lamb or a mid-sized dog, the permanent loss of 1 POW per 10% probability of summoning success, and 1D4 SAN. The spell can only be cast at night, when the night is clear and the stars are easily seen.

SUMMON BYAKHEE: This spell costs no additional power to use, but can only be cast successfully at night when Aldebaran is above the horizon (October through March are the best months). One byakhee will be summoned per spell success.

1% Cthulhu Mythos Knowledge for reading and understanding this note. Study time 3 days.

Events to date:

Important time note: it takes at least 2 hours by ferry to reach Swan Quarter from Ocracoke, and vice versa. Private boats can make the trip much more quickly.

James O'Neil came home to find his daughter dead. The next day he is arrested for murder. He knows he didn't do it, and believes that his other daughter is in danger from the Egyptian cultists. Ellen's boyfriend, James McAuley, and Grey, a marine biologist friend of James O'Neil, go by the prison to visit James, and find out what happened. The newspapers publish all kinds of stories on this "sensational" murder - there are very few crimes of this nature on Ocracoke, so it makes quite a splash.

James has also called a coast guard friend of his, Joe Wilson. After they talk to James O'Neil and Sheriff Tate (and learn Motive, Method and Opportunity), they run off to the morgue, where JA watches the tape of the autopsy of his girlfriend, (No SAN loss, unbelievably) but learns nothing of interest that was not already in the police report.

Grey leaves his car in Swan Quarter, and the three men drive to Hatteras and then take the Hatteras Ferry to Ocracoke. They go to James O'Neil's house and search it. Grey finds several notes written in Arabic in James' desk. Three of the notes are very brief, one is longer, and appears to contain some sort of formulae. Grey does not speak Arabic, but he takes the notes anyway. JA figures out how to open the Dr.'s study, and he finds a bottle of the poison used to kill Ellen. He takes it. Grey searches Ellen's room and finds pictures of her and her roommate, Brieana. Brie lives in Wilmington (and knows nothing useful, except that Ellen did or did not keep a diary, however you want to play that, Kevin). They also search Ellen's car, which is out front. (See description of Ellen). The coast guard, Joe, is called off on a drug investigation. The other two spend the night in the O'Neil house. Elizabeth comes home and admits that she thinks her dad is guilty.

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The next morning, JA goes to one of the ships Elizabeth worked off, the "Sunken Mariner", alone and asks about the reference to "Spanish Galleon ?" which he found in Ellen's car. He then goes diving alone near where the ship is anchored. Meanwhile, Grey goes back to Swan Quarter to get his car.

James O'Neil has gotten nervous, especially since Joe has had to leave the case, so he calls in a private investigator, John. John brings a professor of the occult, Geoffrey, along as his friend. They go talk to James, then arrive on Ocracoke and go look at the North side of the church on Rt. 12 (the main road from the Hatteras ferry into town). They talk to the pastor, and find out where the library and the school are.

Meanwhile, two well-meaning but poor grad students (Aims Taggert and Gavin O'Cohen) are wandering around Ocracoke on a kind of working vacation. They go to the library to look up folk stories about the Outer Banks.

The four men meet in the library and then go their separate ways. The students find the books "Strange Sightings Off the Outer Banks" and "Ghost Ships of the Atlantic", the occult professor, who is looking for indications of witchcraft or occultism amongst the residents of this backwards little island town, finds newspaper articles about a kid named Gary Dillingham who mutilated the only stallion in the Ocracoke pony herd 10 years ago. He also finds a book about the Carib Indians.

After leaving the library, the two students wander up the beach and notice some excitement going on offshore. Grey, who has a boat from the Oceanographic Institute, also notices the excitement, and goes off to investigate. The two students, because they have cameras, are watching from shore through the telephoto lenses. Turns out that JA has been killed while diving alone. Shark attack apparently, although Grey has some doubts.

John and Geoffrey go to the school and dig out records of Dillingham. They find out that he was a bad kid, who left the island 10 years ago, shortly after the horse affair. They also find out that although he was not from an original Island family, he hung out with a kid called Doward Brough, who was. Doward was a spectacularly ugly kid, with bulging eyes and a stooping posture. He had a tested IQ of 70, and went everywhere with Dillingham. When Doward quit school, he went to work as a fisherman. John and Geoffrey go to the docks and visit the Seafood Company, which is a shop/clearinghouse located on a pier that sells some of the fish that the fishermen bring in. They inquire as to the whereabouts of Doward, and are told he will get back from fishing around 7:30 pm. John decides that although Geoffrey seems to be having fun looking up all of these possibly occult-related tidbits, it would probably be wise for him (John) to start doing what he was paid for. He and Geoffrey head off to the O'Neil house to visit the "scene of the crime".

Grey goes back to James O'Neil's house. The two students decide they need binoculars, and wander inland to find a store. Since they don't know where they are going, and since many of the shops on Ocracoke are in houses, in "residential" areas (there isn't really a "residential area" on Ocracoke, anymore than there is a "downtown" or a movie theater, or a taxi, or a laundromat) they eventually wander until they see John and Geoffrey standing on the porch of the O'Neil house. Recognizing them as the men they met in the library, they go over to say "Hi". Grey hears them on the porch and locks the door. (?) The four men gain entrance when one of the students knocks on the door, and John identifies himself as working for James O'Neil. After looking around the house , John and Geoffrey leave to go back to the docks, and Grey goes with the two students to look at JA's body.

Grey is only slightly affected by the sight of the badly mauled body. The students are pretty much indifferent. After Grey has examined the body finding a tooth that does not belong to a shark (he tells the ME this), and after the students take pictures of the tooth and the body, Grey and the students go back to Grey's house with JA's car. During the night, a creature gets into the house and is repelled by the three men staying there. The battle is actually quite humorous, since only one of the men had any conventional weaponry. Gavin pretends to be asleep on the couch until the creature passes him, then leaps up shrieking and attacks with his fists, Grey shrieks and runs down the stairs, using his shotgun to fire holes in the ceiling (he was excited), and Aims runs into the kitchen and finds first the broom, then as many knives as he can, all of which he then throws at the creature. Finding itself impaled by several knives (Aims made some lucky throws), and only being there to investigate the effects of JA, the creature retreats out the window and away. Everyone involved is quite rattled by the event, and spend the rest of the night very uneasily.

When Doward docks, John and Geoffrey help him unload his fish, give him $100, and ask him if they can talk to him. He says he has to make deliveries, which they help him with. Then they follow him to **3/4 Time**, which is the local bar/dancehall, give the bar tender $100 to pay for Doward's drinks, give Doward another $100 and start asking him questions about Dillingham, and any strange sightings off Ocracoke (I don't know where this question came from, unless they were somehow influenced by the students' inquiries into ghost stories and folk tales [basically these guys got ahead of themselves]). Doward says yea, maybe he's seen something, but they are people, just people. They don't think he's ugly.... The PI and Geoffrey ask him if he will take them out on his boat. He agrees (its about 10:30 pm now). They head out on the boat.

After several minutes, it occurs to Geoffrey that he is out on a boat in the middle of the ocean with an ugly, drunk ex-JD, he doesn't know where they are going, and he can't see John (who has gone to the bow, in front of the small cabin). Doward has gone astern, and is rummaging around in a large box or chest. Geoffrey notices that Doward is "looking at him funny" and shouts "Hey, where are we going?" Doward gestures in a forward direction, and continues rummaging. Geoffrey asks him what he is looking for; Doward smiles an idiot's smile, and returns to the wheel. John hears a splash off the bow, but cannot see anything when he looks for the source of the noise. He comes back around the cabin, and he and Geoffrey again ask Doward where they are going. When Doward merely grins, Geoffrey tries to climb up to the wheel. Doward offhandedly pushes him down the ladder. They order him to stop and when he just looks at them with a malevolent leer, pull guns on him. He laughs, and jumps off the boat. John and Geoffrey manage to get the boat turned around and they make it all the way back to the dock, where they crash into the pier. They run down to the police station, where they report what happened (leaving out the part about pulling guns on Doward, and emphasizing Doward's pushing Geoffrey down a ladder). Gene Jackson, the deputy, is unimpressed by their description of Doward's actions - he says that it sounds like Doward was just having some fun, and he could swim well enough to take care of himself. They ask where Doward lives (having looked in the phone book earlier and discovered that there are no street addresses on Ocracoke); Gene tells them "over there a ways" but to leave old Doward's ma alone, as she is sick, and hasn't been seen out of the house for months. Gene suggests that if John and Geoffrey are interested in folk tales, they talk to Carl "Toad" Teeter, who will be on duty in the morning. The two men go to a hotel for the night.

The story so far, cont.

The next morning, everyone but Geoffrey and John head to Hatteras to buy as much hardware and explosives as they can. They run into Tensen and Morbius, two mercenary bo-hunk dilettantes, at the Sporting Goods Store, and hire them as muscle, in case any more of those nasty green slimy big-frog-like things show up. Grey is actually beginning to think about what it will be worth to him to prove the existence of a whole new marine life-form. Fame (and wealth) flashes before his eyes, although he doesn't altogether forget how frightened he was last night. Tensen and Morbius are unconvinced about the "new marine life-form" idea; they think the intruder was probably someone in a frogsuit. Gavin and Aims are indifferent to both theories, but feel that they may have encountered the source of at least one of the local island legends.

When they finish on Hatteras, they decide to go visit James at the prison. Geoffrey also goes to Swan Quarter to see James with John, and to meet a friend of his, Nigel. Nigel is an author who is coming to Ocracoke on vacation, and maybe to find something interesting to write about. John then returns to Ocracoke in order to investigate the O'Neil house more closely, without everyone else hanging about getting in the way.

At the jail, James tells them that there are only two copies of his book manuscript, one at the publishers, one in the Eastern Carolina Ocracoke branch bank on Ocracoke. His neighbor, old Sarrie, has his safety deposit key, and she will probably give it to Grey, since he is a friend of the family. He asks them how Elizabeth is, and they realize that she has not been seen since yesterday. They all get into Grey's boat (except John) and rush off towards the place where Shipwreck Magazine's two ships are anchored. Grey and Aims have a drink with Captain Bob Grumby of the "Sunken Mariner" while waiting for Elizabeth to return from her dive. Everyone else stays aboard Grey's ship. Geoffrey finds that he is very distressed about being in a ship on this much water. He hides in the cabin and refuses to come out until they return to shore. When Elizabeth returns, she boards the "Treasure" and dries off, then chats a moment with Gavin, Geoffrey, Tensen, Morbius and Nigel before going aboard the "Sunken Mariner" to talk with the other two party members. Meanwhile, Grey and Aims have managed to take some interesting pictures of two manuscripts they find in the Captain's cabin. The other members of the party have noticed that several members of the ships' diving crew are extraordinarily ugly. Everyone gets nervous. Doward puts in an appearance, visiting the Captain Grumby on the "Sunken Mariner" and everyone gets even more nervous. The Captain, when asked, explains that Doward is quite knowledgeable about the weather and sea conditions in this area, and that he is helpful to them in locating hidden shoals and sand bars. Morbius notices that one of the crew on the "Sunken Mariner" threw an object in the water. Having nothing better to do, he and Tensen decide to dive for the object. Tensen hits his head on the way in, and hangs stunned in the water for a few moments. Morbius dives after the object, which is falling very slowly through the water. He feels something brush him just as Joe notices that there are 3 shapes on sonar, not two. Morbius manages to grab the object and hurries back to Tensen. They both get out of the water. Joe decides maybe he was just seeing things on the sonar. The object turns out to be a notebook, sodden and unreadable, which no one recognizes except Geoffrey, who thinks it may be John's.

The party heads for shore, and splits into two groups. Aims, Grey, Tensen and Gavin go to the Oceanographic Institute to develop all of the film taken to date. The photographs of the manuscripts are all too blurred to read. Grey makes 3 copies of everything, and hides it among various files at the Institute. Aims calls the Teeter residence to make an appointment with Toad Teeter for 10:00am tomorrow, to discuss Island folklore. They then go to the O'Neil house, and find John with his face, hands and feet eaten off, but no signs of struggle other than two bullet holes in the walls. There is a minimum of blood on the wood floor, and some green splatters that lead out of the house, through the lab and into the brush behind the house, leading to the water 300 yards away. The blood is not completely fresh. Tensen follows the footprints for a little bit, then returns to the house. Aims takes pictures of the room and body, then calls the police, hanging up before they can tell him to stay where he is. They try to contact Sarrie, but Tuesday night is movie night, and Sarrie is not at home.

(It should be mentioned here that The Deep One had not had the chance to search the house before John showed up at around 4:30. The Deep One hid when Sarrie's daughter and son-in-law showed up at 5:00pm to visit with Sarrie, have dinner and get her ready for the movie at 8:30. When the adventurers showed up at 9:00, the Deep One gave it up for a bad cause and went back to the water. At this point, the cultists are still hoping for secrecy, and don't want a spectacular murder to be investigated. The Deep One had not understood the need for secrecy at first, so it had left the body. It was severely berated by Elizabeth for leaving such a mess. A rug will be thrown over the small blood stains on the wood floor [which have been scrubbed out as well as possible in the time allowing], the bullets will be pried from the walls (leaving holes, but no metal) and the green stains will have been cleaned up as well as possible.)

They head off to Grey's house, where they discover that the interior of the place has been totally pulled apart.

Meanwhile, Morbius, Nigel and Geoffrey go to Grey's house, where they discover that the place has been completely ransacked. The furniture has been slashed into, the wall panels have been smashed, Grey's tank of exotic fish has been shattered, and the fish are dead on the living room floor. Claw marks are evident to the paranoid investigator.

The story so far, cont. 2

The mercenary bo-hunk dilettantes bug out, since they decide they have to think about all this weirdness first. Aims undergoes a radical, instantaneous sex-change, and asks to be called Amy. (New player taking over old character)

After screaming and moaning about his house, Grey and the others try to decide what to do. Meanwhile, the police have showed up at the O'Neil house, and discovered that there is nothing wrong there. (The Deep One came back with help (Doward) and cleaned the place up after the party left) The police drive over to Grey's house to find out what is going on, and chide Amy for calling them on a prank. Grey says "PRANK! Look at MY HOUSE!! Monsters! Claws! etc." The police think he is on drugs, and tell him to come down to the station (everyone else has faded into the woodwork at this point, to avoid being noticed). Grey manages to control himself, and requests that the police officers investigate the house. The police are under the impression that hooligans probably trashed the place, but they are happy to investigate. They tell Grey to find himself someplace else to spend the night, this here's a crime scene.

Grey and the police officers go over to the O'Neil house just to show Grey that everything is OK. Grey is miffed. He does spot the bullet holes, but sees that there are no bullets in them. The police say they could just be big nail holes.

Grey and Amy go over to the Oceanographic Institute to develop their film of the body at the O'Neil house. Meanwhile, Geoffrey and Nigel have gone for a walk along the beach, to clear their heads and think. Grey runs into Joe, the coast guard guy, who has gotten back from his drug bust. Grey, Amy, Joe, Gavin, Geoffrey and Nigel all meet back at Grey's house at midnight. They discover that Elizabeth has decided to spend the night with the magazine crew, freak out, get on Grey's boat, and proceed out to the Shoals with sonar a-blazing. Nigel and Geoffrey do not go along, averring that roaring off over the water at midnight is an incredibly silly thing to do - they go back to their motel room, eat dip and try to translate the Arabic letters that Grey found in James' stuff at the O'Neil house.

The party sails to within 1 mile of the "Sunken Mariner", waits and watches, until their sonar registers many many shapes. Grey looks, freaks out and fires his shotgun until empty in the general direction of the shapes. Joe looks, is shaken and turns on all lights. Amy and Gavin don't see anything. The "Sunken Mariner" turns on all lights, signals Stop Shooting! Grey & Amy board the "Sunken Mariner" , and Grey tells the captain about the monsters. The captain thinks Grey is on drugs, tells him to calm down. Grey asks for Elizabeth, the captain says she is on the "Treasure", in port. Meanwhile, Amy has slipped away to look for Elizabeth. Amy eventually hides in an equipment closet after trying to hide in the head (bathroom to her) and noticing that she was noticed. Grey allows the captain to lead him to the captain's cabin, where he accepts a drink to calm his nerves. Grey asks where Amy is, and when she doesn't answer his call, he freaks out again and starts running around screaming for her. The captain manages to calm him down, and goes off to start a search. Grey steals the manuscripts he saw in the captain's cabin, tells the captain that he (Grey) will check his (Grey's) ship to be sure that she didn't go back over, goes over to his own ship and hides the manuscripts. Grey then reboards the "Sunken Mariner" and tells the captain that Amy is not on his boat, please find her.

Amy is eventually found and trapped behind the door in the equipment room, but not before she hears Elizabeth's voice from one of the rooms across the hall saying "haven't they gone yet?" Of course, when Amy insists she heard the voice and demands to see the rooms in question, there is no one in them.

Everyone returns to Grey's boat, and they head for shore, keeping a wary eye on the "Sunken Mariner". When Joe checks into the Coast Guard station, he receives a complaint about the marine biologist from the "Sunken Mariner". He takes a coast guard cutter and goes back out to the SM, where he takes a statement, says he'll look into it, and after leaving, discards the statement. He goes back to the Coast Guard station and arranges for a watch to be kept on the Shipwreck Magazine boats. Everyone goes back to the hotel room where Geoffrey and Nigel are staying, and start to translate the documents and catch up on sleep.

Next morning:

At 10:00, Amy goes to her interview with Carl Teeter.
At 8:30, Geoffrey and Nigel go to Swan Quarter, (arriving 11:15) where they discover that James is dead. They say they are friends of the family, and sign for his personal effects. James O'Neil died of being hung by his shirt. There will be a small scrap of paper in his pocket that has some Arab script on it. (The script says "Silence"). Although there was no suicide note, the death will be attributed to James' remorse at killing his daughter, together with the realization that since there is an air-tight case against him, he had no chance of inheriting the money, or enjoying it. (This is, of course, Sheriff Tate's theory about James' death).

The death occurred at around 8:30 pm, about 1 hour after dinner was served in the jail.

Dinner is brought in from a local diner. The air conditioning at the jail was on the fritz, and it was very hot. The guard at the jail fell asleep for a little while around 8:15 pm. He woke up about an hour later, and found James at 10:00pm, when he went to check the prisoner.

At 11:30am, Grey shows up at the prison at Swan Quarter and finds out that James is dead. He shrieks that it isn't fair! They have proof that he wasn't guilty! He finds out that Nigel and Geoffrey had been at the prison a little earlier, but said they were going to the morgue. He leaves for the morgue.

The story so far, cont. 3:

Carl "Toad" Teeter is happy to answer all of Amy's questions about Jonathan Teeter, and Charlie Teeter and ghost stories and Carib Indians and what not. What he doesn't know, he makes up. Amy doesn't really learn anything that she didn't already know, but she does get some confirmation that according to legend there are some frog-like creatures that live off South Point, and have been there for as long as there have been people to notice them.

Nigel and Geoffrey go to the morgue, and are joined there by Grey. They find out there are bruise marks on the back of James' neck (as of knuckles) but decide that since he hung himself, he would have bruises. They remember that Toad works the day shift on Ocracoke, and jump in Grey's boat to get back to Ocracoke in order to interview Toad.

Joe goes to the Coast Guard station to arrange for a dive near the Shipwreck Magazine dive site. He is suspicious about what those folks are really up to. Towers drops in to arrange a dive, and basically commandeers Joe's group out from under him, but then decides that Joe can lead the dive. He tells Joe he is investigating a drug pipeline that Shipwreck Magazine may be a part of. He tells Joe to be ready to go at 12:30pm, then leaves to go to the police station.

Towers is with the NSA. He has been sent to investigate the rumors of a new marine life-form inhabiting Diamond Shoals. The NSA is interested in the potential weapons use of this life-form, or the potential security risk if, as they suspect, the life-form is actually enemies of the United States in a secret underwater base just off America's shores. Towers is here to find out.

When Amy leaves Toad, she goes across the street to The Trolley Stop Cafe for lunch. She sees a man (Towers) go into the police station, and idly watches.

Towers visits Toad, and reveals that he is with the DEA, working with the Coast Guard on a big bust of Colombian Drug Dealers Shipping Crack. Toad is so excited that it doesn't occur to him to wonder what Colombians (shipping crack, of all things) are doing shipping drugs through Ocracoke. Towers asks him if there has been any unusual activity on Ocracoke recently, leading Toad to speculate aloud that maybe James O'Neil was a drug dealer, and Ellen too.... and maybe that Grey fellow, James' friend was a drug dealer too, and that's why his house was wrecked - look, see, here are the pictures. Awful mess, weren't it? Towers notes the claw marks. And maybe, Toad goes on, those Shipwreck Magazine fellows are all drug dealers too....Towers makes careful notes. As he leaves the police station, he notices Amy taking his picture. He sneaks up on her in the cafe, but she is unimpressed. They chat about what she is doing here, and what he is doing here. (This took place between the players, and I didn't hear what went on, Kevin).

As Towers and Amy continue lunch, Grey, Nigel and Geoffrey arrive back on Ocracoke and go to the police station. They ask almost the same questions that Amy asked, but by this time Toad is so excited that he asks them if they are working with that DEA fellow...OOPS! forget I mentioned it, fellows. They ask what he is talking about, and he tries to change the subject by mentioning that they are the second people today to ask him about island folklore. They ask who else is interested, and he describes Amy, and says maybe they can catch up with her, she's over there having lunch. At this point, Amy comes over and joins them, since she noticed them when they arrived. Towers has left to walk back to the Coast Guard station. Amy mentions that Towers is interested in marine activity, and Grey leaps in his car and roars off after Towers (who is about a quarter mile up the road). Grey jumps out in front of Towers, and asks him point blank "are you here about the frog monsters?". Towers says "I beg your pardon?". After this inauspicious beginning, everyone manages to catch up to Grey and Towers, who begins flashing ID and questioning everyone (right there in the middle of the road). Nigel and Geoffrey are not helpful at first, but decide that the guy's ID does look legit, and maybe they shouldn't mess around too much with the government. Towers drops Joe's name, and everyone decides to go on the dive, except Nigel and Geoffrey, who think that diving into water that may contain God only knows what is incredibly silly. They decide to go to Doward's house. Grey says wait, while we are waiting for everyone to get ready, I want to go to Sarrie's house and get that key. Amy goes back to the Coast Guard station and tells Joe the dive will be postponed until 2:00pm. Towers, Grey and Gavin, who has showed up by now, go to Sarrie's house. Grey asks Sarrie how she's been. She says well not too good, the rheumytism's been acting up, but she did have a nice BM this morning. She asks Grey if he's got a girlfriend yet, and says that he has to watch out, some people *might start* to wonder about him if he is all the time seen with just men.....when introduced to the others, she tells Gavin he needs a haircut, and says something rude about government men to Towers. Eventually Grey manages to ask her about the safe deposit box key. Sarrie agrees that if it will help that nice boy James, Grey can certainly have the key...if only she could remember where she put it. After several minutes of haphazard searching, she asks if the boys would like some lemonade, and starts for the kitchen. Grey manages to spot a chain around her neck, and asks her what's on the end of the chain. Sarrie remembers, oh yes, that's where I put it, and gives Grey the key. They leave as she goes into the kitchen to prepare lemonade. Gavin feels bad, and goes back to say goodbye. He sees her standing in the kitchen looking puzzled and slightly annoyed, as if she were thinking, now what the hell am I doing in here?

The three of them run to the bank and are allowed to see the contents of the safe deposit box (all of James' personal and legal papers, as well as his manuscript). Towers tries to take James' will, but he is not allowed to. He is allowed to take a copy. Grey takes James' manuscript.

Everyone then goes to the Coast Guard station and piles onto one of the bigger boats. Tower announces that he will not be diving - he will stay above and direct from there. Two drug sniffing canines are taken along for verisimilitude.

Meanwhile, Nigel and Geoffrey have gone to Doward's house. The house is a ramshackle old two story wood affair, on 18" stilts. The upper story windows are boarded over. It is situated only 40 feet from the water, and surrounded on 3 sides by scrub trees and brush. The two men go up to the door, and Geoffrey knocks. They see a curtain move in the lower story, so they redouble their attempts to attract the attention of the house's denizen(s). After awhile, they decide to check the door. It is unlocked, so they go in and start prowling about. The house is in dismal condition, with trash scattered about, and damp everywhere. They find no one downstairs, so they go up to the second floor to search. While upstairs, they hear a door open downstairs, and footsteps creak across the floor and begin up the steps. Nigel tries to go out an upper story window, but it is boarded over. He tries to go down the stairs, but there are creatures on them. He panics, and throws himself at the boarded up window nearest to him. Geoffrey has drawn his gun, and is crouched in a ready position when he sees Nigel's actions. Nigel manages to burst through the window, and falls out onto the first floor overhang. He sees a group of hideous creatures coming out of the water and heading towards the house. Geoffrey fires his gun at the creatures inside until his gun is empty. He then dives out the opened window and jumps off the house, landing flat on his face. The group of creatures below pummels him into unconsciousness and start to carry him toward the water, where now a human waits with a boat. Several creatures have come out on the roof, where Nigel threatens them with a camera. When that is patently unsuccessful, he climbs to the top of the roof, and pulls out a bottle of vodka, tears his shirt and stuffs a rag into the neck of the bottle. He is so excited that he drops the bottle of vodka, which breaks on the overhang. Nigel searches his pack frantically for anything remotely offensive. He scrambles away from the approaching creatures, menacing them with asthma spray and a book. Finally he sets fire to the book, and then drops it when it burns his hand. The burning book sets fire to the spilled vodka, which sets fire to the roof of the house. The creatures cringe back from the flames, and Nigel jumps off the overhang and RUNS AWAY. Several of the creatures on the ground chase him, but they fall back when he reaches the road. Geoffrey wakes briefly while he is being put into the boat, but is re-pummeled into unconsciousness.

Nigel runs to the police station, they ride back out to the house, see the fire, call the fire department. Nigel is under suspicion for arson, but he manages to slip away. He tries to convince the Coast Guard that they need to go out to the "Sunken Mariner" because some monsters have kidnapped his friend. The Coast Guard think he is on drugs, and crazy to boot. He leaves the Coast Guard station and goes to the docks (about 50 feet away). Nigel does finally manage to hire a boat, and roars off to the Shipwreck Magazine boats.

Geoffrey is taken to the "Sunken Mariner" and questioned about the whereabouts of the stolen manuscripts. He readily admits that although he doesn't have them, his friends do. He is bound and gagged and stuffed into a closet in the same equipment room that Amy hid in previously.

The rest of the fearless crew, and Grey, stop one mile up-current (inland) from the "Sunken Mariner". They check the sonar and see 15 shapes near the bottom a mile away. Joe, Grey and 5 Coast Guard divers enter the water and swim towards the shipwreck site. As they get closer, they see that several figures are holding cameras in the water, and there are lights positioned on the bottom to better illuminate the scene. The rest of the figures appear to be working on the bottom. When the diving party is within 40 feet, they make a horrid realization. Joe is shaken, but he has a job to do. One of the divers is immobilized in fear, and several of them are visibly affected. Grey is so shocked that he has difficulty breathing. Ten of the figures do not appear to be human. These ten swim towards the diving party. Grey panics, and blows his tanks, shooting himself toward the surface. The rest of the party prepares for battle.

Grey suffers severe bends, and becomes unconscious shortly after he reaches the surface. The five human divers from the "Sunken Mariner" surface a few minutes later, and start dragging Grey towards the "Sunken Mariner". Towers sees this, and orders the Coast Guard ship to make towards the "Sunken Mariner". He shouts to the divers to bring Grey aboard the Coast Guard ship, as they have a small decompression chamber. The divers comply, and Grey is placed, unconscious and bleeding from nose, ears and eyes, into the decompression chamber. The Coast Guard ship stations itself alongside the "Sunken Mariner" and the magazine divers return to their ship. The Coast Guard observer ship that Joe arranged for the previous day also comes in closer, and stations itself near the "Treasure", several hundred yards away.

Underwater, the battle with the Deep Ones is somewhat cumbersome. The Deep Ones are hampered by their own clumsiness, and their inability to all reach the divers at the same time. The divers are hampered by their spear guns, which they have to reload after each shot. Joe is using underwater flares to fight with, which is unusual, but allows him more freedom of movement, and speed. Three divers are killed, one is wounded, and Joe is severely wounded before the Deep Ones are all killed or driven off. (They leave when they hear Towers' Coast Guard ship, and the Coast Guard observer ship both draw closer.)

Towers starts shouting at the "Sunken Mariner" crew, asking where the rest of his divers are. Shortly thereafter, Joe and the remaining two divers surface. Joe is dragged aboard the Coast Guard ship and first aid is administered by the other two divers. Towers tries to question the men while they are working on Joe, but they are too upset to answer him while concentrating on first aid. Towers, Amy and Gavin board the "Sunken Mariner" , taking the dogs with them. Towers starts questioning the five magazine divers. Their story is that they finished their dive and came up. They saw a man in the water who obviously was in trouble, so they picked him up before heading for their ship. They did not see anyone else underwater. They were working on a shipwreck site for their magazine, taking pictures and doing minor excavations. Amy demands that the captain allow her to watch the film being developed. The captain accedes, and Amy and two crew members go below decks to the dark room.

Towers wants to arrest the lot of them, but they refuse to go with him. He questions the two Coast Guard divers just before they leave for Ocracoke, to put Joe on a helicopter to Hatteras (the nearest hospital is on Hatteras). They say that they saw some figures in the water and then the... the...the MONSTERS ATTACKED!...no, they didn't see what the human figures were doing, they were too busy fighting the...the... MONSTERS. Towers is disgusted.

At this point, Nigel arrives on his rented boat, and insists Towers speak with him in private. Meanwhile, Amy hears a dull thudding noise coming from the equipment room she had hidden in before. As soon as she can, she leaves the dark room and heads toward the sound. This time she has her shotgun with her.

Towers comes back from speaking with Nigel, and corners the captain of the "Sunken Mariner". The captain seems to have something on his mind other than the recently returned divers. Before Towers can get any information from him, a shot is heard from belowdecks. When the captain turns at the sound, Towers hits him in the back of the head with a pistol. The captain drops unconscious, and Towers orders everyone on deck to lie down. Gavin holds a pistol and two dogs on everyone, while Nigel climbs aboard, and Towers runs towards the sound of the shot.

In the equipment room, Amy has looked around and not seen anything. She hears the noise again (Geoffrey is bumping his head on the closet door) and opens the closet. She sees pile of wet suits, but when she pulls them aside, she sees Geoffrey. At this point she is attacked by the two crew members from the dark room. She shoots one, and forces the other one to untie Geoffrey.

Towers, coming down the ladder, sees an armed man heading into the equipment room. Just to be safe, Towers shoots the fellow.

The story so far, cont. 4:

Towers joins Amy in the equipment room. She orders the remaining crew member to untie Geoffrey. Geoffrey can not feel his arms and legs by this time, and informs Amy and Towers that they may have to carry him. They wait for him to recover while Towers checks the guy he shot for signs of life. Aboveboard, one of the crew attempts to jump overboard into the water. Gavin, who is already very nervous and unused to handling a shotgun, fires on the crew member, and essentially chops him in half. The water is getting somewhat rough, and the "Treasure" has been hailing the "Sunken Mariner" with no response.

Back slightly in time, a vacationing cop named Mike Excaliber stops by the Ocracoke police station to say "Hey" and mention that he is on the island, should Toad want to talk shop or anything. Toad thinks that Mike is in on the big drug bust Towers told him about, and chatters happily away about it. Mike being an nosy guy, decides to rent a boat and go out and take a look. On his way out, he hears the "Treasure" hailing the "Sunken Mariner" over and over with no response. The "Treasure" is asking why the Coast Guard are boarding the SM and if it has to do with the incoming storm. Mike arrives in time to see Towers taking the crew of the "Sunken Mariner" into custody for kidnapping. He goes to Towers and offers his services. Towers is glad of the help for the present. The crew of the "Treasure" is asked to come in for questioning, they agree, but explain that a storm is coming in, and they must take steps to ensure the safety of the two boats. Towers promises they will be free to go shortly if they are not implicated in the kidnapping.

Everyone goes back to the Coast Guard station, where Towers begins questioning. Mike goes to the questioning with Towers, although he doesn't really know what is going on. The rest of the group go study manuscripts, and get lunch. Amy tries to sneak aboard the "Treasure", but makes a lot of noise and is noticed by a few of the crew members that Towers allowed to stay and secure the boats. The crew members are removing all movable objects, particularly all papers and notes from the boats. Amy pretends she was looking for someone, and leaves. She watches the boats, and eventually sees Elizabeth leave the "Treasure" and head inland. Amy follows the rest of the crew to the Island Inn, where the crew checks in for the night, and Amy calls to leave a message at Nigel and Geoffrey's hotel to go check on Elizabeth's house.

Nigel and Geoffrey run to "The Country Store" on Howard Street (one of two streets on Ocracoke that have names, Howard Street is where all the Howard families live) to commission a silver whistle to be made. While they are at it, they commission two, and pay $200.00 to be sure the whistles will be finished by noon tomorrow. They then head for their hotel, where they find a message from Amy to go to Elizabeth's house.

Mike heads over to the "Sunken Mariner" after Towers has spoken to Captain Grumby (before the crew from the "Treasure" gets there) and does a thorough search. He finds the captain's log, and a few more documents regarding dive locations and historical references. He brings what he finds back to the Coast Guard Station, where Joe's colleague, Mark Hutchinson (the pilot of the boat that has Grey in the decompression chamber) has the bright idea to link into an international net and type in the manuscripts for more rapid translation. He does this with the captain's log, which is in Spanish, and with an ancient scrap of paper that is also in Spanish. He expects the results sometime tomorrow.

Towers questions both captains and decides that the captain and crew of the "Treasure" are innocent of the kidnapping, and more importantly, that they are also innocent of whatever else seems to be going on. (He is correct.) When he can get no information out of Captain Grumby, he arranges for the whole crew of the "Sunken Mariner" and the five divers that were aboard to be sent to Wilmington (by way of Swan Quarter) and held in maximum security.

Geoffrey and Nigel meet Elizabeth at her house. She is hurricane-proofing the house. They help. When she gets to her father's laboratory, she is stunned to discover that it is completely empty. All of her father's supplies are missing, as are all of his notes. Nigel and Geoffrey assure her that they know nothing about it, and in fact, hoped she could help them with information about her father's Egyptian cultist contacts. She says she only knows one name, Achmed Al Hamid.- Was her dad into something weird? Wait...Cultists?!?...what? Dad worked with cultists!? Elizabeth is shocked and amazed. (She really is.) Geoffrey and Nigel ask Elizabeth if she will come back to the Coast Guard station with them. She says sure, but let me pick up lunch first. Hey are you guys staying for the hurricane? Okay! We can have a hurricane party. You guys can stay here. They agree, then head back to the Coast Guard Station. Elizabeth stops along the way to get hotdogs from the Trolley Stop.

Amy, after staking out the Island Inn for awhile, gets tired of waiting for people to leave, and has Captain Tirye (the "Treasure"'s captain) paged to come to the Coast Guard station immediately. Since he just came from there, and was rather put out by being brusquely questioned by Towers, he storms down to the desk and places a call to Towers. When he reaches Towers, he demands to know why he is being recalled to the Coast Guard station. Towers tells Tirye that he has no idea who called, but that Tirye is definitely not needed at this time. Meanwhile, Amy has run upstairs to the Captain's room, broken in the door, and grabbed two plastic bags full of papers. She runs out just in time to miss the Captain, who storms back to his room, sees the damage, storms back downstairs and phones Towers again. Towers does not react well to being yelled at, explains that he has no idea what is going on over there, and will Tirye quit calling him, thank you goodbye.

Amy goes through the papers and discovers nothing of interest. The captain's log is just as you would expect it to be, no hidden references or mention of anything peculiar. She leaves the bags in the laundry and goes back to the Coast Guard station. Grey is released from the decompression tank, and then given a sedative when he proves to be hysterical and dangerous. Everybody studies.

Elizabeth eventually leaves to go visit friends. Everyone but Mark and Towers goes to the O'Neil house to crash. The next morning, everyone continues studying. Around noon, Nigel and Geoffrey go pick up their whistles. Around noon, Mark gets his translations back from the net. The captain's log is gibberish, obviously in some kind of code. The other note is strange. Everyone studies and compares notes (FINALLY). Everyone gets very nervous. The storm moves in as the day progresses. Around 8:00 pm, the evacuation of the island is begun. The party discusses leaving, but so far has opted to stay.

The story so far, cont. 5:

After a heated discussion of just what the hell they are going to do now, the party votes on whether they should leave, stay, or as Grey opts, move to South Dakota. Half of the party thinks that the dagger must be recovered as soon as possible, the other half thinks that possessing the dagger would be a crazy thing to do, and besides, the cultists probably have it already anyway. Eventually, the whole party manages to bully itself into going on an immediate dive. A special bad water boat is prepared, and Mark is instructed by his superiors to check for any boats that may not have made it in yet. Radio is spotty due to the electrical activity of the incoming storms. A gale has arisen, although the hurricane is still at least a day distant. At 10:00pm, the party departs for the dive site. Upon reaching the site, the water is so choppy and rough, and visibility is so low, that Mark drops the anchor in order to hold his location. This causes the boat to be battered by the increasing waves, and actually bob under the water several times (this boat is build to be able to stand this kind of activity - it can actually be overturned in the water and it will right itself and shed excess water). Amy, Grey, Nigel and Towers prepare to make the first dive. Mike straps himself into the captain's chair and activates the sonar. Geoffrey, who is afraid of water, has taken Valium and is hiding belowdecks. Mike and Gavin help the divers prepare, then go below as well. The initial attempt to dive is inauspicious; several divers hit the water hard, and they realize that they did not tie up to each other before they got into the water. Also, they forgot to get a light. Upon attempting to regain the ship, the divers discover that the pitching deck makes their task formidable. However, they do succeed in their preparations, and begin the dive. The visibility in the water is very low, almost non-existent. As they approach the bottom, they see that the diving lights from the "Sunken Mariner" are still in position, and operative. They approach the excavated ship. The ship appears to be empty, and mostly rotted ribs anyway. The divers explore for awhile, and Nigel is disappointed to discover that the ship appears to be American, and only around 150 years old. However, Amy is more intrepid than the others, and upon swimming to the bottom of the excavation (which is also the bottom of the ship) she discovers a hole. Grey, meanwhile, is certain that monsters lurk just beyond the threshold of his sight. Nigel is inclined to agree, and everyone moves very cautiously into the hole. The hole opens out into a cavern-like area, thirty feet long and roughly twenty feet high, the ceiling of which is the bottom of the excavated ship, and the floor of which appears to have part of the bottom of a ship buried and just barely exposed as a part of it. There is some dredging equipment in this cavern. Amy figures out how to use the equipment, and while Nigel watches for monsters, she turns the equipment on. The cavern fills with sand. After a bewildered moment, Nigel gropes around until he finds the exhaust tubing, and attaches it to the dredging equipment, running the end out into the old American ship. Amy turns the equipment back on, and goes to work at one end of the buried ship. Just as she uncovers what appears to be a hole in the hull, and looks inside, Grey calls time on their air, and they have to make their ascent.

When the divers attempt to climb aboard the Coast Guard cutter, Amy is caught under the chin by the edge of the boat, and is knocked, unconscious, back into the water. Grey is also hit by a glancing blow to the head, and falls back, semiconscious. Towers manages to board, but Nigel can not, since he is supporting Amy, and trying to reach Grey. The others on board come up from below to try to help-Geoffrey is frightened, but his friend is in danger, so he temporarily overcomes his fear. Unfortunately, he is not much help, loaded up with Valium as he is. Nigel finally gets a grip on both of his compatriots, and is pulled aboard by everyone else (he was roped to Towers, remember). Geoffrey attempts first aid upon Amy, and only succeeds in dislocating her neck further. Grey declines medical aid, although he does attempt to staunch the bleeding. Geoffrey recommends that he does not go back down. Amy is strapped to a backboard, taken below, and strapped to the floor. Gavin goes down to attend her. Mike prepares to dive in her place.

Mike, Towers, Nigel and Grey (against Geoffrey's advice) prepare to dive, taking an extra tank each in order to prolong their stay underwater. They go back down to the ship cautiously, wondering where all of the creatures are, and redescend into the cavern. After more excavation, they are able to enter the buried ship. There are skeletons and rotting sailcloth, but much less damage to this lower ship than there was to the upper one. Apparently, this ship was buried almost immediately upon sinking-quite literally swallowed up by the ocean floor. After several minutes of searching, Mike comes upon a room that contains the remains of a bed, on top (actually, bottom, since the bed is on the ceiling) of which is a small (12"x6"x6") chest. Mike attempts to move the chest, and discovers that it is very heavy. He gets the other divers to help, and they manage to move it up to the floor of the excavated American ship. Grey drops his dive weights, and uses his buoyancy compensator to buoy up the chest as much as possible for the ascent. The divers additionally drop their used tanks in order to lighten the load further.

When they reach the surface, Nigel manages to climb aboard, but is pulled back in by Towers, who is thrown while trying to climb up. Nigel unties himself from the rest in disgust. Geoffrey uses the anchor winch to lower a rope and Grey and Nigel affix the chest to the lowered rope. As Mike climbs aboard, Mark spots a waterspout (at first he thinks it is a huge monster) heading towards Ocracoke, directly in line with the boat. He shouts and points. Grey and Nigel take one look and give up trying to board the boat. They dive back down and head for the bottom. Mark tries to weigh anchor and outrun the spout, but the anchor winch is being used to raise the chest, which has been bumping against the side of the boat in the confusion. Gavin, Geoffrey and Mike manage to get the chest aboard, and lug it belowdecks to lash it down.

Before Mark can move the boat, the waterspout moves past them, striking the cutter a glancing blow in passing, and knocking it out of the water (snapping the anchor chain) to send it tumbling through the air. The boat smacks back into the water, and everyone but Mark and Amy (both of whom are strapped down) take a beating. Fortunately, all surfaces below on this boat are padded, since it is a boat specifically designed by the Coast Guard for bad weather rescue actions. However, although no one sustained any cuts, everyone was very bruised and very groggy.

When he recovers somewhat, Mark attempts to find his bearings and regain the dive site. He has some difficulty, but after around an hour is rewarded by the sight of Grey and Nigel bobbing in the waves. When they attempt to board, Grey is again struck on the head, and falls back into the water, unconscious. Nigel briefly considers leaving him to his fate, but relents, drops his and Grey's tanks, ties Grey to himself, and by dint of herculean effort, manages to pull himself and Grey aboard.

Back at the Coast Guard station, the chest (which weighs roughly 200 pounds) is placed in a decompression chamber and sealed in for safe keeping. Everyone collapses, exhausted, and sleeps until morning.

In the morning, Mark and Amy go into the decompression chamber, while everyone else watches from outside. The chest is examined closely, and the six Elder Signs (one on each side) are seen to be intact, despite the beating the chest took while it was being recovered. A discussion arises about whether to open the chest or not. Most people vote no, but since Mark is in the chamber, he wins the argument, and cuts the chest open. When he sees the contents, he is overcome by a desire to touch the dagger. He reaches in and (with effort) picks it up. OH, glory! it is his, His, HIS! Amy is somewhat concerned about his reaction, and attempts to see what all the fuss is about. He is happy to show her, and in fact holds the dagger up for everyone to see. Amy feels the attraction, but only slightly. She is more disturbed by Mark's reaction than attracted by the dagger, and she thinks the dagger might have some influence on him. Meanwhile, Towers has seen the dagger, and he must have it. He attempts to open the chamber, but is pulled off and held by Geoffrey and Nigel. Mike activates the chamber with the help of Grey, and draws off most of the oxygen. Mark drops unconscious, and Amy starts to faint. When Mark lets go of the dagger, Amy picks it up, and as she drops into unconsciousness, her hand tightens to clench the dagger. Grey floods the tank with oxygen, and opens the door. He pulls Amy out, but is so upset that he does not notice her greatly increased weight. He searches Mark.

Meanwhile, Geoffrey and Nigel have let go of Towers and come forward to help Grey. Towers pries Amy's hand off the dagger and picks it up. OH! The POWER! It is HIS! Amy and Mark slowly come to, and Mike brings Geoffrey, Nigel and Grey's attention to Towers. Towers will not let anyone come near him, but does not take Mark, who is behind him, into account. Mark attacks Towers, manages to force his hand behind his back and gets the dagger. Grey has gotten his shotgun by this time, and insists that Amy, Mark and Towers move to one end of the room, away from the others. They comply, although Towers does not stop his efforts to get the dagger from Mark. Grey fires into the floor, but no one pays him any further attention. Amy sneaks behind Mark and hits him over the head with a small tank, knocking him out. Towers grabs for the dagger, and Amy knocks him out, too.

Nigel and Geoffrey drag Towers and Mark out of the room, and tie Towers up. Nigel comes back into the room, assuming that Geoffrey will tie Mark up. Geoffrey assumes that Nigel doesn't want Mark tied up, and Mark remains untied. Meanwhile, Mike goes and finds a shovel, and Amy cowers on the other side of the room from the dagger, aware that her desire to touch it comes from the dagger itself, and afraid that if she comes too close, she may give in to it. Grey waves his shotgun around, looking menacing, and keeping everyone from coming near the dagger. Mike returns with the shovel, and between them, Mike and Grey manage to use the shovel to pick up the dagger and replace it in the chest.

Amy prepares to cast an Elder Sign on the chest, and believes that she succeeded. Nigel and Geoffrey also pitch in, as does Grey. After the four signs that had been cut have been recast, the affected party members are checked. Amy says she still feels a compulsion to touch the dagger. Towers is practically frothing to get at it. Mark is still unconscious. Nigel examines the chest, and discovers that one of the Elder Signs is flawed. He recasts the spell, and Amy feels her compulsion fade to wistful remembrance. Towers feels like a recovering crack addict, and Mark feels desire, but no obsession.

Mike, meanwhile, has been gathering together items to make a look-alike chest, and has spent the afternoon fashioning it.

The resealed chest is placed back within the decompression chamber, and the door is padlocked. Elizabeth shows up that afternoon, and everyone except Mark hurries to greet her somewhere other than the room with the chest. When she asks them how the dive went, they tell her that their boat got hit with a waterspout, so they had to come home. She nods her understanding, and invites them to the hurricane party later that evening at South Point. Upon being asked by Geoffrey, she says that come to think of it, she thinks she did see an Arab looking guy staying at the Island Inn. She heads back out, and everyone goes back to the room with the chest. Upon entering the room, Grey discovers that the padlock has been cut, and the door to the chamber is standing open. Everyone (except Mark, who is not there, and Towers, who is still tied up in another room) rushes into the room and stares at the open, empty chest.

Well, this was a weird session, and one for which I have no clear explanation. The party, individually and as a whole, sort of berserked and went homicidal/suicidal with no prompting from either Keeper. Basically what happened was: Towers works free of his bonds. Amy is staying in the infirmary owing to her neck injury. The rest of the party have something of a shouting match, and then split up to go in various directions. Grey begins searching for Mark, Geoffrey and Nigel go to the Island Inn to find the Arab (they have this idea that if they can get the herbs to brew the space brew, then enchant the whistle, then summon a byakhee, they can take the dagger into outer space to dispose of it). Mark is in his office, waiting to hear from the net on the decoding of Captain Grumby's log book. Gavin decides to go with Geoffrey and Nigel.

Towers, once free of his restraints, and hopelessly under the thrall of the dagger, follows his compulsion to Mark's office, where he attempts to once again hold the dagger. Mark, who is not holding the dagger himself, but who does have it in his possession, resists Towers with increasing violence, until finally, Mark shoots Towers with a pistol. Towers dies. Mark runs out of the Coast Guard station, into the storm outside. Grey and Amy both hear the gunshot, and come running toward the sound. They see a man's back disappearing towards an exit, make the correct assumption that it is Mark, pause for a glance each into the office, see Towers dead, and head off in pursuit. Although they are too far behind Mark to catch up to him, they do manage to keep up with him long enough to see that he seems to be heading for the school. They catch up with him in the school's science lab. He has placed the dagger in a large glass beaker, and is searching for acid in the supply cabinets of the lab (Mark at this point can still feel the compulsion of the dagger, but is in mastery of his desire and knows that he must destroy the dagger to be truly free - he has not touched the dagger with his bare flesh since it was sealed in the chest by the party).

Meanwhile, at the Island Inn, Geoffrey, Nigel and Gavin gain entry to the Arab's (Jesrad al Hamid) room and are menacing him verbally to get him to return the herbs stolen from James' laboratory. They throw him down on the bed and tie him up, spread-eagled, face up. Jesrad starts humming, and (here comes a weird part) in order to keep him from completing his chant/curse, they give him a tracheotomy. He starts to choke on his own blood, so they stand the bed frame upright. Then they say "Now, talk!" (When you told me this, Kevin, I just had to laugh). Realizing that a man with a hole in his throat cannot speak, Geoffrey puts his finger in the hole. Jesrad starts cursing them (by the way, they have been effectively cursed by an Egyptian cultist). Nigel and Gavin, meanwhile, have started searching the room, and they have come across a nasty, little, disassembled aluminum crossbow, with six quarrels, along with the box containing the stolen herbs. They manage to assemble the crossbow, and when Jesrad continues mumbling at them, they shoot him with one of his quarrels. To cover their crime (?) they paint standard satanic symbols on the walls with his blood, and otherwise arrange the room to look like a bunch of black magic loonies had made a sacrifice. (Good god, what happened to this party?) They then leave the Inn and head back to the Coast Guard station.

At the school, Mark pours the first nasty acid he can find into the beaker. Nothing happens. Grey goes searching for a saw, but he can not find a portable one. He finds a Bunsen burner and fires it up. Mark and Amy spend this time trying to figure out how to get hold of the 50 lb. dagger now that it is immersed in a quart of strong acid. When Grey has set up the Bunsen burner, he grabs hold of the beaker and lifts up. The beaker shatters and splatters Grey with acid. The dagger falls into the sink. Grey runs to the chemical shower, while Mark rinses off the dagger in the sink, then reaches in and picks it up (oops...). Amy notices Mark's sudden change in expression, and tries to get him to let go of the dagger. No dice. She engages in a prolonged but inept struggle with him, in which Grey joins. In attempting to disarm Mark, Grey is shot and lightly wounded. Mark breaks free and runs out of the school.

Mark, with Grey and Amy following, runs back to the Coast Guard station, where Tower's body has been found. He immediately accuses Grey of the murder, and states that he had been out on patrol around the island on foot, determining where each of the people remaining on the island were. He is soaking wet from the storm, and appears genuinely sane and sincere. He states that he is going to change into dry clothing. When Amy arrives, she demands to know where Mark is, and when she is told, she goes to the head and enters it. Mark is somewhat surprised, and half dressed. Amy resumes the struggle to relieve Mark of the dagger. Mark successfully evades her attempts, and finally talks her into letting him finish changing clothes, and to then accompany him to a clear terminal to see if the information has come over the net yet. He assures her that his only desire is to destroy the dagger. She agrees to this, and steps over to guard the outside door against his deciding to leave without her. Mark changes clothing and cleans the gun he used to kill Towers, flushing the cartridges down the commode. A Coast Guard comes by to see what is taking Mark so long, but upon hearing Amy's irritated "what?" from inside, retreats in embarrassed confusion.

While Mark and Amy are thus occupied, Grey arrives, wet, bloody, having sustained obvious multiply head injuries, and begins babbling about Mark being crazy, possessed by a dagger, and a danger to everyone around him. Grey has also stopped to pick up his shotgun, so he presents a rather discreditable picture to the Coast Guards. However, it is obvious that Towers was not shot by a shotgun, so everyone is told not to leave the island (which they can't, anyway) and everyone, including all of the Coast Guards, consent to be disarmed. All of the weapons are stored in the Coast Guard armory, which is then guarded by two Guards.

Mark realizes that he will eventually be caught, when the guns are test fired for ballistics, so he goes to the Coast Guard captain and explains some of the events to date, stating that Towers had attacked him and was not entirely sane, that Towers was trying to steal an important artifact that had been recovered, etc. The captain asked to see the artifact, and Mark shows him. The captain (misses his SAN roll) feels the compulsion of the dagger, and agrees not to lock Mark up right away. After all, where can he go? Mark asks the captain if he can use the captain's office and computer while he is waiting. The captain agrees, and leaves his office.

Geoffrey, Nigel and Gavin return from their activities at the Island Inn. Geoffrey finds out from Grey what happened with Mark, and asks Mark to let him see the dagger. Mark refuses. Geoffrey offers to play cards with Mark, the stakes being that if Mark wins, Geoffrey will never bother him again, and if Geoffrey wins, Mark will hand over the dagger. After some thought, Mark agrees. Everyone else stands out in the hall waiting for the outcome. (Privately, each of the players informs a Keeper that he has a weapon ready in case the other one tries something.) When Mark wins the hand, Geoffrey immediately shoots him. Mark is killed.

The captain and several coast guards rush up the hall and into the room. Geoffrey claims self defense, but has not yet had time to pry Mark's fingers open and get the dagger. The captain does this. The captain says that he realizes that Mark was unstable, and in fact, that Mark had admitted to killing Towers. There will be a full investigation, and until then no one is to leave the island. The captain has a very strange look on his face, and Geoffrey makes a brief and abortive attempt to convince him to give up the dagger. The captain does open his hand enough for the other Coast Guards to see. They step forward, and Geoffrey finds it the better part of valor to leave at this time.

Everyone decides to relocate to the O'Neil house and compare notes. When they arrive there, they find Elizabeth. She reminds them about the hurricane party, and asks if anyone wants to come. Amy, Nigel, and Grey decide to go, Gavin and Geoffrey decide to get some sleep.

While sleeping, Geoffrey (who has been exposed several times to the dagger) starts having unusual and frightening dreams. He awakens with a shout after about an hour's sleep, get Gavin, and rushes back to the Coast Guard station to retrieve the dagger.

Meanwhile, Elizabeth drives onto the South Point beach, and the three party members witness a horrifying spectacle - roughly 500 Deep Ones are dancing around and chanting. Two Dagons have joined them. Elizabeth laughs, and runs toward the party. Grey screams, jumps out of the now motionless jeep, and runs away over the dunes. Nigel and Amy also run, although they are not as extremely affected as Grey is. Amy hides in the dunes, as does Nigel. Grey runs the several miles back to the O'Neil house and hides under a blanket under a bed. (Note: Grey went buggers. 20 point SAN loss along with his three phobias: Amphibians, Wind, Water)

Amy and Nigel decided to go back and fight (?) the Deep Ones. They charge the jeep, drive into the midst of the Deep One party, fight gloriously, and are eaten, much to the satisfaction of the Deep Ones.

Geoffrey, back at the Coast Guard station, manages to convince the captain that he doesn't want the dagger, he just wants to show the captain something important. He leads the captain (and remaining Coast Guards) along the beach until they come upon the Deep One party. The Deep Ones showed great respect, almost awe for the holder of the dagger. Geoffrey shoots the captain in the head, and manages to get the dagger before any of the Coast Guards do. With Gavin at his side, he holds the dagger over his head. The Deep Ones wait attentively, one or two idly chewing on scraps of Amy and Nigel. When he has gotten their full attention, Geoffrey declares:
"Make me a sandwich".

- Finis -

Timeline:

June 21(Thursday)	Elizabeth dies before noon
June 22	James comes home late evening, finds Elizabeth
June 23	James is arrested for Elizabeth's murder, first newspaper account
June 24	James is visited by JA, Grey and Joe
June 25	James calls John and Geoffrey, JA is killed, Doward is met, etc.
June 26	Everyone goes to see Shipwreck magazine ship, get manuscripts, James is killed, manuscripts studied, John (PI) killed
June 27	Sea battle w/Deep Ones, storm rises, manuscripts studied, Joe to hospital
June 28	Preparing for hurricane, island evacuated,manuscripts studied
June 28/29	Evening dive during gale before hurricane. Chest recovered. Deep One party at the beach.
June 29	Chest opened, resealed, reopened. Elizabeth invites people to hurricane party. Deep One party at the beach.
June 29/30	Party freaks out and kills itself

Opinionated Views and Comments

On Gaming Systems

On the subject of complex and simple gaming systems, it is my opinion that it is based upon the genre being played. Let's face it, Star Wars is great fun to play and a great system. But, I do not think that it would be so good if the system were changed. The simplicity of the system allows the game to continue along at its rapidly flowing pace. Anything more complex would bog down the game.

On the other hand, Champions is what I consider a complex system. I freely admit that I am still confused about ECs, Multipowers, and combat. However, these do not detract from the game. The in-depth character generation is one of the best I have seen, for a superhero game. The complexity of structure is one that adds to the role-playability of the character. Although I have not played Marvel SuperHeros, I have discussed it at length with people who have played and ran the game. It sounds to me like the character creation is not held in check by anyone but the GM. And that the power definitions are vague at best, allowing a creative gamer to do things that are basically over the character definition. Rob tells me that this allows for more comic-book style gaming. I hesitate to say which is best without playing Marvel, but I like Champions.

On to the super complex game system...MERP. Would someone please give me easier, clearer instructions for this damn game. I bought most of all that MERP has out from Jay, and, while it makes interesting reading, I have yet to attempt to run a game using this system.

Now, as to the problem of changing systems for different genre, I do not think it would work. Ok, I like the Chaosium gaming system of skills based upon percentile rolls. I think that the game is well suited to the system. But I would not play Champions in the Chaosium system. Other than being hard to define powers, the game would lose some of the flavor that the system gives it. Making a gaming system overly complex is one of the first things that players are going to balk at. If any system has to be broken down to such intricate detail, it had better be an outstanding game with a unique genre. Because if it is not just overwhelming fantastic, it probably will die on the store shelves.

On Fantasy Role-Playing

It is interesting that some people got the idea that I did not like epic fantasy. Allow me to clear that matter up. I had been almost exclusively playing AD&D since 1979. The gaming club of Asheville introduced me to the other genres of gaming that I had missed and I have not found any that I would not play. Since living in Asheville, I have played with the best role-players in the world. (Yes, take a bow, you're good and everyone knows it!) In fact, I owe the majority of my style of GMing to the influence of Pete, Jackie, Nicky, Rob, Paul, and Wayne.

My problem is not with the genre. What I have become tired of is the arguments and general discord that a lot of games tend to dissolve into. I role-play to get with my friends and have fun. People yelling over the rules or are upset because they would or would not have done something based on the actions of other characters who trotted off on their own are not my idea of an afternoon of fun. I have grown tired of players that slip off on their own and try to screw with other players, to the detriment of the game. I'm not talking about just fooling around with the other characters, I'm talking about actually trying to kill each other off.

I like Call of Cthulhu because it forces people to do a lot of role-playing together as a group. Let's face it, in Cthulhu, if your character wanders off alone while out on a expedition, it is probable that you will be eaten (with much crunching and smacking of lips, tasty, tasty, tasty). This is a team game.

In Cthulhu games that I have been in, the motivating factor of the game is not to build up characters, it is to experience the atmosphere and share the excitement and tension that the characters build up amongst themselves. This is a refreshing change and any role-playing game that promotes this group unity is a game that I will willing play.

I am not saying that all other game systems are bad. What I am saying is that, in my experience, most people are not *familiar with* the Cthulhu world and the gaming system, and that is what makes it great. This game is designed around really big monsters that can kill and maim without most of the world being able to do anything about it. Most of the time, the players are not supposed to directly assault these creatures; they have to work together to figure out another way to stop them. Characters that slip off and try to arrange things for their own personal benefit usually end up screwing themselves.

It all boils down to playing together in a group and having fun doing it. Playing for the fun of living another life, on another world, as a fantasy character of wishful creation. Forgetting about all the bullshit that we have to put up with daily and doing something else. Idealistic? Why do you role-play?

Friendly competition is ok, but head-to-head competition is not fun. The best example I have of this is the gaming tournaments. I joined RPGA because I wanted to make the statement that I think that gaming is ok, that no one is going to freak out and kill off everyone. There is too much bad press about gaming. So, RPGA has a ranking system based upon how high you can get voted in a tournament game. They say that it is so they can determine how many cons you go and how many varities of games you play. All well and good. Except for the assholes who play for points and not for fun. You know the people, they are the ones who, totally out of character, do something obviously grandstanded for the other players so they can get the votes.

Yes, I am pissed off at these people. Games are supposed to be cooperative, a group effort, with individual achievments working toward a basic goal. These jerks are playing for points and screwing the other players in the process (without even kissing them). This is probably where you got the idea that I did not like fantasy games. No, I like fantasy games. I do not like self-serving assholes who play to relieve some kind of hidden malice toward other people.

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DRUID'S CAULDRON / WITCH'S BREW III

Well, an interesting second issue it was indeed. Many thanks for all the many and varied comments on our column. I hope our second attempt was equally enjoyable or provoking or whatever. Like Null (or is it Void? I keep getting you two mixed up since your background biographies change with the wind), I prefer not to make many mailing comments except to say that I still love the idea of Motive and think all our members are sending in great stuff (what Wayne does with the great stuff and why he prints the weird crap instead is beyond me, but....) At any rate, I keep looking forward to getting each new issue, so I guess we're doing SOMETHING right.

Looking back over what we wrote about in Issues One and Two, I have realized that I've talked a lot about characters (notably one of my favorite gaming topics), about how to create and play their personalities, motives, backgrounds, alignments or philosophical attitudes, and how NOT to play in ways which antagonize your fellow players and GM. In this issue, I would like to address some other aspects of characterization and role playing -- aspects that are too often ignored, and which seem to me to be essential to a really good game (as well as to playing your character well). Once again, I will have to beg your indulgence as I try to fumble my way through yet another treatise on my own pet peeves, but then, I always heard that writing should be passionate to be considered good writing, and I'm nothing if not passionate about things when they piss me off!... er, annoy me. Herewith, my latest attempt at deathless prose....

MORE ON CHARACTERIZATION: THE IMPORTANCE OF CLASS

AND

ROLE PLAYING IN A VACUUM: GRANDSTANDERS, MELODRAMATICS AND PLAYING TO THE POINT ***

*** Please note that the comments and contents of this column are solely the responsibility of the party of the first part (commonly known as Nicky), and any negative response to or attempt at prosecution for the clearly biased and personal opinions contained herein should be directed to the aforementioned party of the first part. The party of the first part (hereafter referred to as POTFP) may be relating some incidents involving other members of Motive, and some of them may be less than complimentary, so if you get annoyed, please confine your annoyance to the correct writer: POTFP. Neither the Editor, nor any other members of Motive, including the POTFP's column partner are in any way responsible for the material contained in this part of Druid's/Witch's (yeah, I guess I really should have named it Bitch's Brew... too late now). Actually, except for a mention in passing, I really don't think I'm going to be that tough on anyone... in fact, by the time I get around to talking about that part of the column, I'll probably have forgotten the particular incident I intended to include in the first place... so, I guess you can just sort of ignore the previous disclaimer (unless I remember the incident and include it, in which case, all bets are off!). So, now that I've used up a quarter of this page with useless drivel, on with the show!!

THE IMPORTANCE OF CLASS

Whether you refer to it as "Class", "Type", "Profession", "Occupation", "Character Template", or some other, more esoteric name, what the character does for a living and the actions he normally performs as part of the game world are just as important as what he IS (human, elven, stubborn, greedy, honorable, second son of the duke or whatever else describes him). Because I began with A D & D, I am most familiar with calling this a character's "class". When I first began playing D & D, only four classes were available: Fighter, Magic User, Cleric, and Thief. There was also something called an "Elf" that could be played (a crossover Fighter/Magic User), but having read my Tolkien, I knew the nice D & D people were just a little confused, "Elf" was a Race, NOT a class.

At any rate, I gleefully went about rolling up four stereotypical types: brawny, dumb fighter; sneaky, suspicious thief; intellectual, slightly sinister magic user; and pure-hearted, compassionate cleric. In fact, I still have my original characters, and occasionally play them. They have lasted throughout the many years, and have even served their stint as minor NPC's in a game or two.

I can still clearly remember, however, how easy it seemed to me to tell them apart (not as easy as it sounds when you realize I was playing all four of them at the same time...in the same game!), and even how simple it was to come up with the characters and their personalities --- even though I had never done ANYTHING remotely like it before (having NOT been one of those innumerable literary types who have been writing their own short stories and fantasy classics since age 4 or so). The key to the easy time I had lay in their "classes". I immediately saw that the profession of a character not only defined what he did, but in part WHO he was and how he thought about things and behaved.

This may seem overly simplistic to some of you, who are probably thinking "Well, of course, dummy, obviously a fighter doesn't think like a mage --- or a thief or cleric, for that matter!" Indeed, it is simplistic, but is far too often overlooked when play begins. Granted that people get ideas for characters and roll them up or create them to be certain classes, and that this helps shape the original conception of the character's motives and personality as well as some of his background. This is all to the good, and can only lead to a better character, one who is less like a cardboard cut-out of a hero and more like a real person. I have no quarrel with this. I don't even have any real quarrel with players who maximize their characters' attributes in the areas they want to stress (strength 18/00 as an example), what I do have a problem with are those players who play out ONLY their characters' personality or interaction with the rest of the party or the NPC's and do not or cannot play the class as well.

I am currently involved in a number of different games ranging from A D & D through DR. WHO and MARVEL SUPERHEROES, and the one way the other players invariably annoy me is by playing all their characters' quirks and fears and melodramatic personality disorders or other weirdnesses while neglecting to actually DO anything in the game.

Many of the people I play with always want to play spellcasters, but spend their time posing, preening, making what they believe to be wry and witty little comments or going into incredible histrionics at the drop of a hat about some minor thing which happened to great grandma half a century ago, but which forever scarred little Iggy the Illusionist (and which always seem to involve "Iggy" moaning, groaning, being as obnoxious as possible,and being unable to control these interminably long and vociferous reactions to whatever caused the outburst to begin with). In some cases, said outbursts have lasted well over three quarters of an hour and usually exclude at least half the group from any participation (this record HAS been beaten, but that is THE INCIDENT which was referred to in my disclaimer, and I'm not sure whether I can work it in or not.)

When we NEED a spellcaster, however, they can't make up their minds or can't think of anything to do because they don't know the spells they have, don't know how and when to apply them when they DO know them, and more often than not chose the wrong spells to take for that day anyway because they never bother to THINK like a spellcaster and assess what is LIKELY to happen in any given situation.

And seriously, God help the party that gets stuck with someone who has not a clue as to how to play a cleric! It is fine for the cleric to be stern and want to wipe out evil and face it down, but going toe-to-toe in spell combat when you have fighters capable of holding off the opponent and two of your party members are dying for lack of healing is incredibly foolish. Actions such as the ones I've described DO happen, HAVE happened in games I've been involved in.

Some of it can be put down to lack of experience for a while, but when this is an ongoing thing, it tells me that 1) the person playing the character just isn't paying attention to anything but himself, 2) the person doesn't care what happens to anyone else's character so long as attention remains focused on himself, 3) the person doesn't have the slightest idea how to REALLY roleplay (since one would assume that the cleric would be upset to see his friends dying) or 4) the person has no idea of how to or no intention of playing the character's class (since a superficial knowledge of "big guns" type spells is no substitute for actually understanding and using your spells in the party's best interests).

Though this is more obviously a problem when the character is a spell caster, it is equally annoying to play with people who have: Rangers who never track, or who act in evil and selfish manners though they are supposed to be "good" and are supposed to eschew treasure; Thieves who never check for traps, insist that fighters open locked doors and chests by breaking them, and who constantly run to the front in any fight rather than remaining hidden or in the background to make a critical strike from behind at the appropriate moment; Paladins who treat everyone else with open contempt (despite the 17 charisma they MUST have to BE paladins), or who refuse to use their gifts like detecting evil or the laying on of hands for healing which may be critical to the survival of a party; Druids who never take any spells which can be really useful like "speak with animals" or even "plant growth" but who are always loaded down with "call lightning" spells.

Maybe its just me. Maybe I have too rigid an idea what the various character classes are "supposed" to be like, but I don't really think so.

Stewart (of Null & Void fame) plays a football player turned mage in one of Jim Crabtree's futuristic magic-has-returned games, and Bones is NOT AT ALL your usual run-of-the-mill mage. He rides a magical beer barrel, swills the aforementioned brew in enormous quantities, carries a BIG sword and likes to get in on the fights in an up close and personal way, but he is still a MAGE He uses his spells for the party in creative and useful ways.

Thus far, I've talked about two different aspects of playing (or failing to play) the class of the character. I think its pretty obvious what is wrong when the person doesn't know (or perhaps doesn't care about) the parameters of his character's class --- he and the rest of his party must get by without the help of that particular class. It spoils the enjoyment of the other players who ARE playing their characters' classes. There is very little more annoying than to be stuck playing a fighter and to KNOW what needs to be done by the mage, and to have the mage either oblivious (too dumb? too distracted?) or determined to make some move he thinks is just "wonderful!", but which the rest of the party knows is tantamount to suiciding and murdering the rest of the party ("Yeah, GREAT, Magnifico, sure! I think its a WONDERFUL idea to cast that fireball at that ogre who's standing 5 feet away from us. Gee, how much damage does that sucker do? Oh, yeah, by the way, you DO know the area you cover with that spell, don't you? Oh, just asking... especially since I've only got 6 hit points left after our little battle with the orcs back there. Say, you know, I just remembered that I think I left my backpack back there, think I'll just go back and get it. YOU can easily handle this ogre by yourself with that WONDERFUL spell. You don't mind if I take the rest of the party with me, do you? I mean, I might get lost or something.....") Point made?

GRANDSTANDING, MELODRAMA AND ROLE PLAYING TO THE POINT

Equally annoying (at least to me) is the other aspect which I briefly covered (in the description of our melodramatic player who had the weird grandma), the one I call role-playing to no purpose or grandstanding. While I do thoroughly endorse a style of roleplaying which is the opposite of hack and slash (or power gaming as it is now being called), I have NEVER liked or understood the self-indulgent melodramatics and grandstanding which many people believe is the hallmark of good roleplaying. Just as you MUST have fully developed characters to really enjoy roleplaying, those characters MUST have a setting and situation in which to interact that both allows them to play out *their* personalities and gives them the opportunity to accomplish something. It is up to the gamemaster to provide that setting and story, but it is equally the players' responsibility to see that they move within that setting and that they advance through the story in some manner consistent with who and what they are.

To me, this means that if the players are completely ignoring the scenario in order to "play out" their own little soap operas which have little or nothing to do with the plot, or if they insist on holding up the party while they take care of their characters' private concerns or if they arbitrarily decide that they don't feel like leaving the inn because of some perverse desire to be difficult (or more likely to focus attention on themselves alone), that I truly believe that the party (and gamemaster) ought to leave them behind or simply confront the player and demand that his behavior stop.

I am, in fact, becoming exceedingly tired of this particular sort of play-hogging. Some of this I covered in my Maturity & the Art of Roleplaying column, but was very disturbed to see this kind of play not only rearing its ugly head at GenCon, but seeing players unabashedly wallowing in self indulgence of the worst kind in tournaments I had believed were reserved for really advanced roleplayers (well, folks, here we go. This is IT! THE INCIDENT is here, sorry Deena [oh, that was last issue]).

I had always heard that the Master's tournament at Gen Con was filled with wannabees who all wished they could be Grand Masters and who played lots of nasty little political games to make certain they got to WINNNNNNN !!!!! I had heard the same about the Grand Masters. Well, last year I played in the Masters (I played in it again this year), and I found the characters to be really interesting, the plot amusing, and the people playing seriously interested in playing well, cooperating with the other players, doing their utmost to make sure everyone got a chance to shine and a chance to do things, and in general, acting like one of the most advanced and nicest group of people I've ever had the good fortune to play with.

Having had this experience, so at odds with what I had heard, I dismissed the reports as being made by disgruntled losers who couldn't admit that they lost because other people played better. With this in mind, I gladly signed up to play in both the Masters and Grand Masters tournaments for this year. Once again, I loved the Masters --- the game, the characters, and the people were all really neat and fun.

I was really looking forward to the Grand Masters as a slightly more rarified (or more experienced) form of this, and indeed I had also played in two other Grand Masters games, at Origins and at Condescension, and had enjoyed both of those enormously (even though I didn't win them, and most likely didn't even "place" since all the players were really top notch and lots of fun). Maybe thats why I was so disappointed and angry when the Grand Masters at Gen Con (probably THE most prestigious and one would have thought BEST roleplaying tournament in America if not in the world) turned out to be such a virulent exercise in self indulgence, vanity, grandstanding and general selfishness that I was shocked almost to the point of immobility.

I felt like not only were the players trying to be as melodramatic (to no purpose) as possible, and as loud and exclusive of the other players as possible, but did so quite shamelessly and gleefully with the full intention of trying deliberately to cut most of the other players out of the action and garner all the attention for themselves. These players played neither their characters' personalities nor their classes, but spent hours (3 to be exact) indulging in histrionics and poses over completely irrelevant things that had NOTHING to do with the game, and which served neither to advance the plot nor anyone's characterization.

They were not even particularly amusing, and degenerated into a mob of people trying to outshout one another. If winning means that much to them, they can HAVE the awards. Personally, since there was really nothing else to judge by, I ended up voting for the four players who were quietest and who annoyed me the least --- whether they were technically the "most talented" actors or not. I will probably NEVER play in another Grand Masters at Gen Con, and it seriously bothers me when those who are supposed to be the "best" are simply the loudest, most demanding, and most childish. I will gladly play the Masters, where I enjoyed playing with good roleplayers who are also considerate of others, and who seemed interested in exploring their characters' personalities in more than a superficial way, but still managed to play to the point and stick to the plot, which was rather a good one, and which it would have been a shame to miss. I think those who aren't playing this way ARE missing a great deal, and that makes me really sad.

* * *

Why do I always come out of these columns sounding like a whining bitch? I really don't mean to. I also don't mean to exclude myself from the categories of being melodramatic, self-indulgent, difficult, arbitrary or any of the other things I attributed to people I have played with (in fact, it should be noted that some of the people I have played with have BEEN me)! I am simply trying to identify and address certain problems which I have encountered frequently and which seem to recur unless deliberate steps are taken to eliminate them.

I would like to see us all be mature and talented enough to go right to the heart of role playing, that place where you not only know, but ARE the character, and from which you can instinctively act in ways which advance the character's (NOT the player's) goals.

-------- Nicky

END COMMENTS: At some future time, Jackie and I want to do a column on tournament or competitive gaming, the pros & cons, and a sort of how to on it as well. We'd love to hear from those of you who are either for or against competitive gaming, and we'd like to hear your ideas about it and reasons for thinking of it as you do (assuming that you think about it at all). We will also probably be including some material on our gaming worlds in future columns (just so you can see where we get our whacky ideas about gaming from). ---- N.

And now it's time for the "other half" of the D/W conscience scouring hour. Before I begin my approach to the topic under discussion, I have some comments to make along the lines of continuing dialogue between contributors. Even though I have mostly eschewed mailing comments (see last issue), I would like to say I enjoyed the compliments from some of you about our article. I particularly liked hearing from those of you who wanted to open up cans of worms suggested by some of the material we covered. In particular, I hope a certain Carl Buehler does come up with some GM categories for our amusement. Also--I have a special place in my heart for Keith's comments about the importance of systems in games--and I want to address that specifically and at some length in the future. For now, however, I have lately been revising my own personal "freewheeling" attitude (rules? this game has rules?) in the light of recent experiences. I will never be a technical expert--but I do consider that a definite weakness and a point for constant attempts on my part to do better. Maybe after I have addressed our current topic, I will actually get into "my revised version of dealing with rules in games." In general, I am continuing to be pleasantly amazed at the variety of approaches the members of MOTIVE have adopted. (One other personal comment to Amperi...er..Mike. I am a crossword afficianado (or aficianado) (or afficcianado)--lover--but I also dislike marking up a magazine (unless it's a crossword puzzle book). Mike, DO YOU KNOW HOW DIFFICULT IT IS TO PHOTOCOPY ANYTHING PRINTED ON RED PAPER? Just wondering.) I continue to be impressed with how talented we all are. So now that I've said nice things, let me get on with...

THE IMPORTANCE OF GAMES IN GAMING,
OR
ROLE PLAYING AIN'T EVERYTHING

Nicky and I recently experienced a summer glutted with role-playing conventions (ORIGINS, CONDESCENSION, OURCON, and GENCON). For me, the experiences were varied: when they were good, they were very, very good, but when they were bad...they were similar to some of the instances my colleague noted. I have my own theories as to why.

I had the privilege of playing the first round of the Grand Masters at Gen Con under the gamesmastership of Frank Mentzer, one of the founders of the RPGA (TM) and the author of a number of classic role-playing tournaments as well as co-producer (with Gary Gygax) of the infamous Temple of Elemental Evil. Before he began the actual tournament, he prefaced the game with the following (and I paraphrase): "This is not an acting contest...Role playing is a part of good play, but as important are rules knowledge, party cooperation, and achieving your goal. Keep this in mind when you vote for the best player. Not everyone can act, or even speak well--but good roleplaying consists of more than acting."

In the course of three and a half hours of play under Mentzer, our table not only role-played our characters, but we actually managed to all but complete the scenario--a rarity in tournament play. Part of this was due to the GM's expertise in organizing play, running combats, and moving the party along, but a great deal of it came from the players' desire to work together and to play with, instead of against, each other.

Other experiences at those conventions were not so fortuitous. I had my share of watching two players conduct affairs best done in private for well over an hour in a scenario whose end I will never know because we didn't get past the second encounter. In another game, I had the dubious pleasure of watching a pair of power-gaming yuppies (from California, even) dominate the game master's attention and run rough-shod over what might have been an interesting one-round adventure. These two young men, who shall remain nameless and who are most likely unknown to anyone reading these pages, were ONLY interested in achieving the goal--and ignored the fact that there were four other players at the table. This is one of the few times I actually lost my cool in a tournament game and came very close to walking out from sheer frustration at the selfishness involved in their appropriation of what should have been a pleasantly shared four hours of play.

Somewhere along the line, role-playing has become confused with attention-grabbing (otherwise known as game-hogging). One of the closest parallels I can think of is taken from film. My favorite actors are not the ones who grab every scene in which they appear, but are the more subtle, versatile actors who disappear into their roles and whose names usually take me a minute to come up with, but whose parts I remember for their intensity and rightness.

Unfortunately, I have found some of the worst offenders to be otherwise experienced players who, by all rights, should have learned better but whose behavior has instead come to stand as the definitive example of what role-playing should be. I can only say that this is not a good thing. I feel sorry for the people who go to all the time and trouble to design a game for tournament use (or even for "at home" campaigns) only to have the game ignored because the players are only interested in hamming it up. Why have a scenario in the first place if players are not going to pay attention to it?

I believe that Nicky has amply described the problem. I want to suggest some solutions--as a player and as a gamemaster. As a player, the solution suggests itself--don't do those icky things that waste everybody's time and only garner attention for yourself. Instead, (and this is where I am talking to myself as well as to the gaming world in general) remember that role-playing games are shared experiences--and that they are also games. They have beginnings, they have a cast of characters, they have problems to be solved, goals to be won, and should result in everyone's enjoyment. Really proficient and expert players should realize that the best way to "get attention" is to pay attention--to the game, to the gamemaster, and to the other players.

Knowing what your character can do and doing it is one way to contribute positively to a game. I have seen people in tournaments grab spellcasters or clerics because they "really love playing" them and then proceed to do abysmal jobs (i.e., all fireballs and flame strikes, no detect invisibility or neutralize poison). Being useful and active in a game is one of the best ways to garner attention and approval from both the GM and the other players.

Paying enough active attention to the scenario to come up with useful ideas and approaches is another way to add to, rather than detract from, a game.

As a gamemaster, there are a few things that can be done to encourage good role-playing. The first thing is to stop rewarding selfish behavior. If players stray from the "adventure" for purely personal or self-indulgent reasons, cut them out of the action. Focus your own attention on the players who ARE playing the game. Another approach (best used in tandem with the first suggestion) is to actively reward appropriate behavior. Give the vital information to the players who deserve to get it, not the ones who try to cut other players out so that they can score a coup on the party. Give *greedy* players cursed treasure. Give rude players lots of unpleasantness with the authorities--and then don't dwell on the unpleasantness. ("You're sentenced to thirty days at hard labor in the irradiated mines of Egocentri City. We'll catch up to your character later.")

Maybe I'm just getting old and traditional, but I don't think so. I am and always will be a role-player. I enjoy attention as much as the next guy--especially when I'm running a game. I started out gaming with a bunch of drama students--and indulged in my own version of game-hogging in self-defense. I have also been guilty of shamelessly indulging this kind of behavior in my own games. I'm trying to get over it because I have seen just how exciting true cooperation can be. Role-playing does have a very important part in good gaming--but just as Shakespeare is more than a series of soliloquies, so is gaming more than a "look-at-me" contest.

I would like to add that these comments, though prompted in large part by experiences in tournament gaming where a group of people sits down at a table for a finite length of time and essays a scenario structured to fit the time-limit, apply to campaigns as well. Most of us who put effort into designing and running our own games appreciate it when our players actually play that game as well as their own spiffy characters.

Now for some examples of what should and shouldn't happen in games:

EXAMPLE ONE:

GM: You are traveling to the castle where the princess is being held captive. It's going to be a tough job to get in undetected. As the sun sets you find a secure camp site about an hour away from your destination and set up camp.

WHAT SHOULD HAPPEN:

Boris the Bold: "Let's secure the camp and then make some plans."

Sneaky: "I think I have a way to scout the place unseen--maybe there's a back entrance or something. You're the tactical expert, Mensa, what do you think?"

Mensa: "Despite the information we've managed to get in town, it never hurts to have first-hand confirmation. We'll certainly have to slug it out eventually, but the longer we remain undetected, the better our chances are. If you're going to do a preliminary scout--and I hope it's a brief one (Sneaky nods vigorously), I'll be sure to help you remain undetected for the length of time it should take you to give the castle walls a once over."

Boris: "Father Goodie, you look pensive. Any thoughts?"

Father Goodie: "I'm thinking of Mensa's comment on delaying bloodshed as long as possible. I think I may be able to help by locating any magical traps and silencing our approach until combat is inevitable."

[The players continue to make plans in character, and sleep for the night.]

WHAT SHOULDN'T HAPPEN, BUT ALL TOO OFTEN DOES:

Boris the Bold: "We find a camp site? Great! Hey, Mensa, let's you and me go somewhere private. I have something important to discuss with you."

Mensa: "I'd like to talk to you alone (glares at Sneaky and Father Goodie) for a little while as well." To the GM: "I take Boris' arm and walk off aways into the woods with him."

GM: Well, OK.

Boris: "Now that we're alone, I have to tell you about my unfortunate childhood. My mother hated me and my father disowned me because I wasn't really his kid, and I really need someone who understands me."

Mensa: "I realize that, but you see, I was savagely abused by a red-haired son of a baron when I was younger, and now I have real problems trusting anyone with red hair."

Boris: "But I have red hair. Does that me you don't trust me? Let me play you a love song on my lute and try to change your mind."

[This continues for some time as Boris and Mensa vainly try to work out their love lives. Meanwhile, back at the camp...]

GM: Oh, yeah, Sneaky and Father Goodie, what are you two doing?

Sneaky: "I'm waiting for Father Goodie to go to sleep and then I'm going to systematically go through everyone's backpacks to see if they have anything worth copping for myself. I'm an inveterate spendthrift and I need a lot of easily transferable coinage and valuables to support my lifestyle."

Father Goodie: (To GM?) "Do I hear that? If I do, I'm going to keep my eye on Sneaky until Boris and Mensa get back."

GM: Sneaky hasn't said anything to you, so you can't act on what he's planning.

Father Goodie: ")(**&^*^% ! In that case, since I don't know what spells to pray for since I haven't the foggiest idea what we're planning on doing once we get to the castle, I'm turning in for the night. Sneaky APPEARS to be on watch."

[And the game continues in this fashion ad infinitum.]

WHAT SHOULD HAPPEN WHEN WHAT SHOULDN'T HAPPEN HAPPENS:

Mensa: (To GM) "I take Boris by the arm and walk aways into the forest.

GM: "OK. You find a secluded place about 200 yards from Sneaky and Father Goodie." To the other two players. "What are you doing as you see Boris and Mensa go off without you?"

Sneaky: "I'd call them back, but I don't want to yell and risk being overheard by someone or something. I'll wait a few minutes and try to follow them." (To Father Goodie) "I don't think they should go off like that without at least making sure we can't be spotted by patrols from the castle. Should I go after them now?"

Father Goodie: "Let's give them five minutes--maybe they're answering the call of nature. Meanwhile, we can see to the horses and start taking some security measures to conceal our presence."

GM: "Mensa and Boris, you've found a clearing, alright. You also find yourselves surrounded by a group of green-clad men with bows and arrows. They're wearing badges that identify them as being from the castle. You're surrounded."

[From their concealed camp, Sneaky and Father Goodie get to watch Boris and Mensa dragged unceremoniously away to the castle, where they will undoubtedly get a first-hand look at the castle dungeons--or at least the prison cells.]

Sneaky (in a barely audible whisper): "I knew they shouldn't have gone off like that."

Father Goodie: (heavy sigh): "I don't want to say they deserve it--they are, after all our friends--but maybe we can turn this to our, and their, advantage. If we follow the guards into the castle..."

Sneaky: "I have two potions that might help..."

Father Goodie: "And I can silence us..."

Sneaky: "We may be able to bypass all the traps..."

[And so the party does manage, despite the intentions of the players, to get inside the castle--albeit in a rather unexpected fashion.]

Admittedly, in the above examples, the scenario is a little contrived, the player characters are pale imitations of fully-fleshed-out individuals, and the dialogue is a little stilted and heavy-handed, but each version serves to point up some important things about role-playing. In the first example, the party does manage to come up with the beginning of a plan--and they do it together. They are aware of each other's strengths and weaknesses and listen to each other's suggestions. They also don't fritter away valuable game time discussing their personal problems (something more appropriately done once they are safely back in town). The second example speaks for itself. NOBODY, including the GM is attending to the situation at hand. In the third example, the players who wander off for the wrong reasons get stomped, while the players who are interested in the scenario find a way to turn a bad situation into a salvageable one. Boris and Mensa will have plenty of time to stew in the castle dungeons, Mensa will probably lose all her spells, and Boris will lose his fine enchanted weapons and armor, while Sneaky and Father Goodie attempt a rescue. As for the captive princess--well, maybe when the party is all together again, they can have another go at it.

It cannot be said too often: role-playing games are an exercise in sharing and cooperation. If for no other reason, they are valuable aids to getting along in real life, besides being more fun than a card game.

TANGENTS

I am becoming a real fan of technically expert gamemasters. I have found some of my best convention experiences have been in games where the gamemasters have excelled in their grasp of the rules of the game and of the methods of organizing play. Both Frank Mentzer and Lew Wright, who are regular Gen Con attendees, run very well-structured games. They do all those things I don't do very well, and present a firm framework of rules and judgment calls within which I, as a player, am relatively free to concentrate on playing my character

R)

and playing the game. Within their parameters, they both have proven to be open to non-standard suggestions--providing reasonable methods WITHIN THE RULES OF THE GAME for players to attempt off-the-wall actions. If I observe these technical masters often enough, some of their facility with all those rules I never pay attention to will eventually rub off on me.

In closing, I would like to invite comments on the problem of balancing role-playing with goal-oriented, courteous gaming. After all, most of us have probably been "there." I hope it goes without saying that much of this critique/gripe session is based on the confessions of a guilty party. I live in a glass house just like everyone else I know. If gaming were an art we had completely mastered, it wouldn't be as much fun.

I had intended to cover a lot more ground this time out, but, as usual, it's too late/early in the evening/morning for any more of this--and Wayne has a deadline--which means that other topics will have to wait. One thing I have decided to do, starting with the next issue, is based on a comment from another contributor who mentioned that he wanted to see and hear about other people's games. (I believe I said this in last issue as well.) I am, therefore, planning on entertaining you with/subjecting you to "The Secret History of the Friday Night Game...or Once Upon a Time in Thule and How One Game World Came To Be." Featured will be: "The Great Debate on World Creation," "How Not to Design Player Characters," "The Problem of Turnover in an Ongoing Game," "Running Multiple Concurrent Scenarios and the Importance of Calendars," "Things I Haven't Discovered About My Game World But Almost Certainly Will," and other choice tidbits gleaned from running a game that is approaching its fifth or sixth year and has yet to cover 9 months of game time. (I TOLD you I wasn't perfect!) Maybe I'll just settle for thinking up neat titles and spare the details--but more than likely not. And so to bed...

Jackie

EVERLAST
CRABTREE

The Gaming Spouse

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/**************************************************************/
/* His Introduction:                                          */
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Welcome to the third issue of "The Gaming Spouse". This issue features mailing comments from Pat and several tid bits from me including the obligatory piece on simple versis complex game systems. As I am already a dead man when Deena next sees me I may as well be certain that the right monster is plaguing her dreams. To this end I have included a write up of Muskie along with his portrait. I think Jim Crabtree did a great job of rendering Muskie's likeness. Don't you Deena?

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/* Her Feedback on Issue 2:                                   */
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* Tail of the Monkey Man -- Simple vs Complex Systems? Gamemasters who are good at supplying their own details and realism don't need complex rules! Good gamers who use a complex system are usually wise enough to play 'fast & loose' when the rules threaten to drag the game down.

For novice players, simple rules are less threatening and can be learned faster (allowing more time for role play). WELL DONE complex rules can bring more realism, less inconsistency, and decrease the chance of the novices scratching their heads in situations not covered by the rules. But, how about the poor novice who unwittingly tries a POORLY designed complex system...?

* Null & Void -- The Senator's name says it all! Picture a landspeeder sticker: I'm from New Alabama, and I DON'T support Senator Cartwright.

* White Noise -- A title suggestion for your comic: A_Cross_Walk. Let the readers read it whatever way(s) they want.

* Game/Foot -- Yeah! I had a great time at the '86 World SF Con. Good info, keep us posted.

* Blue View -- The freshmen are as entertaining as our 2-year-old son.

* Cauldron & Brew -- Yes, all role playing characters are wish-fullfilling to some degree, or they'd be no fun. I find it refreshing to be perfect once in a while. It helps me appreciate the colorful parts of the fact that I'm so definitely NOT perfect in real life.

As for The Problem; No Problem! Run a 'paper bag' game. Start it as a one-time shot and see how it goes. Have the

GAMEMASTER make up all the characters. Make sure each character is NOT perfect (have stupid ones, ugly ones, clumsy, nerdy, fearful, unwashed....). Then put the characters in a brown paper bag, & everybody draw pot luck.

This will not single out the problem player, & will probably be a fun exercise for even the more accomplished players. Its also good practice for tournament play.

The best part will be if the players beg to play the game again, and again... Each time, draw the characters at random from the bag so your "problem" player(s) can see how SOMEONE ELSE plays the character (s)he played last time. They can also draw on the examples someone else set with the character they're currently playing. Don't criticize mimicry, its both a learning tool and the ultimate form of flattery.

Most of my problem when I was (am?) at the perfect character stage was that I didn't believe playing "defective" characters could possibly be fun. The exercise above will probably demonstrate otherwise.

* Fishy Bits -- ...so, am I to understand that ALL short CoC games end with the party mauled to death or blithering insane? Maybe that's why the CoC game I played at Gencon turned out 'kinda blah'. Maybe Call of Cthulhu is not meant to be played as a tournament, and we should therefore not play it at conventions. My goodness, what a game.

Or maybe we should be more creative about writing short scenarios, so people like the non-fanatic in your home might some night wake up and see the dark.

That was a good campaign scenario. Now, can you do a non-fatal tournament? How about a Doctor of Pathology and his assistants who, at the end of the scenario, indirectly obtain and analyze a piece of somehow-preserved severed tentacle. Not fatal, and insanity wouldn't necessarily be complete, or even required, but....

* Snake of Forever -- Excellent! Where's the rest!

* Vulcan Poetry -- I have role played in a few scenarios where there were literally NO rules ("Talkies"). The first few times were, remarkably, in training courses at Northern Telecom. Another was at a demo at Gencon '89. Like Jackie, I played a cat, but unlike her character, mine was only special because it was a ghost. Not only was I unable to "speak", I was also unable to scratch, bite, or rub against ankles. I still managed to make a fairly interesting character of it by use of meowls, purrrrs, hisses, and puffed tails. The important thing is: there were NO rules. Characters were given & described (not even written down, unless the player wanted to take notes while the gamemaster described them), a situation was given, and away we went. There were NEVER any inappropriate reactions, since there was never an excess of hitpoints, levels, money, ammo, etc.

Where there are rules, we can sometimes have ridiculousness. Where there are no rules, we can only have "common sense" as it applies to this or other worlds. That's why a good gamemaster is critical to a good game.

I recommend "Talkies" to anyone who has an opportunity to play in one.

Lady Catriona, hail and well met! Good job on the names (its something I always have trouble with).

* Elvis Post -- I fell in love with the Droids as soon as I heard their names! The full description is even better. Many thanks (...but, where's C3-NPC ?)

For those interested in the marriage of Marriage & Gaming, we have this finishing touch from our son, C.J., "One, Two, Three, Four, Five, Six....Dice, Ice......Sesame Street pruduckshun Childrinz Tel'vishun Werkshop!"

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/*****************************************************************/
/* His Champions Character:                                      */
/*****************************************************************/
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The following is the latest revision of Muskie, the "mutant fish man from Lake Michigan" who is designed as an American counterpart to the classic Japanese movie monsters. Just remember, he's not bad, he's just misunderstood and wants to belong. Even Godzilla deserves an occasional night on the town.

Character Name.: Muskie

Val	Char	Base	Cost	Max	Pts		
80	STR..	25	1	99	55	STR roll.: 25	
20	DEX..	10	3	99	30	DEX roll.: 13	CV..: 7
35	CON..	10	2	99	50	CON roll.: 16	
20	BODY.	13	2	99	14	PER roll.: 11	
8	INT..	10	1	99	-2	INT roll.: 11	
11	EGO..	10	2	99	2	EGO roll.: 11	ECV.: 4
20	PRE..	10	1	99	10		
0	COM..	10	0.5	99	-5		
21	PD...	13	1	99	8		
21	ED...	7	1	99	14		123456789ABC
5	SPD..	3.0	10	99	20	Phases...:	X X X X X
20	REC..	20	2	99	0		
70	END..	70	0.5	99	0		
70	STUN.	71	1	99	-1		
					195		

Appearance..: Muskie is a 10' tall, 5' wide, 1760 pound humanoid fish creature. He has webbed hands, a finned back, and the face of a muskellunge.

Background..: It is commonly believed that Muskie is a former EPA action team member who was dropped into Lake

Michigan after eating muskellunge for lunch. See Muskie's super secret origin for the truth.

Personality.: Muskie is a well meaning creature whose appearance, eating habits, clumsiness, simple minded directness, and communication difficulties give him the appearance of being a monster.

Abilities...: Muskie is very strong and very tough.

Disads......: Muskie is frequently perceived as a monster especially by those who pollute the environment and suffer Muskie's wrath. Muskie hates fishermen because he once swallowed a lure (ow).

Experience..: 40
Point Cost..: 315
Point Total.: 315

Muskie's Skills:

em	Climbing, 25-.
em	Concealment, 11-.
em	Conversation, 14-.
em	Deduction, 11-.
em	Paramedic, 11-.
em	Shadowing, 11-.
em	Stealth, 13-.
em	Familiarity with Automobiles.
em	Area Knowledge: Lake Michigan, 11-.
em	Professional Skill: EPA Action Team Member, 8-.
01	Familiarity with Chemistry, 8-.
02	Navigation (Dead Reckoning), 11-.
02	Survival, 11-.
01	Familiarity with Disco Dancing, 8-.
02	Area Knowledge: Chicago, 11-.

008	

Muskie's Powers:

-2	-1" Running.
08	+3" Swimming with 2x maximum noncombat velocity.
05	Life Support (Breath Under Water).
03	Life Support (Immune to Extreme Cold).
10	Elemental Control - Movie Monster Powers
10	15 pts Growth, 0 end, persistent, always on. [+3 Body & Stun, -2 DCV, +2 to be perceived, +1" reach, +15 Strength, and -3" knockback.]
11	Damage Resistance on 21 PD & 21 ED.
20	50% Physical Damage Reduction - Resistant.
20	50% Energy Damage Reduction - Resistant.
15	Spatial Awareness (Passive Sonar).

10 +40 Presence, costs endurance, 2x End = 8 end (Frenzied foaming at the mouth).

10 Fish Whistle - Precognition requiring Hearing PER roll, independent (+2 lim), can only hear whistle (+2 lim), OAF (+1 lim), no conscious control [activates when whistle is blown] (+2 lim), and 4 million mile range.

Note: Muskie hears the fish whistle long enough before it is sounded so that he can arrive on the scene within one turn. This makes the Fish Whistle a convenient plot device to get Muskie into a scenario.

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120

Muskie's Disads:

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125 Base points.
40 Experience.
10 DNPC Normal, 8- (Former Girlfriend and EPA Teammate).
25 Distinctive Features, not concealable, causes abject fear.
15 Hunted by a consortium which is polluting Lake Michigan, 11-. As powerful as Muskie and has extensive NCI.
15 Watched by the US Government, 14-. More powerful than Muskie and has extensive NCI.
15 Must make an EGO roll to speak intelligibly, frequent, greatly impairing.
05 Ham-handed, infrequent, slightly impairing.
20 Simple Minded and Direct, very common, strong.
20 Hatred of those who destroy the environment, common, total.
10 Hatred of Fisherman & Fishing Tackle, uncommon, strong.
15 Reputation as a destructive, dangerous, and helpful monster, 14-.

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315

Muskie's Super Secret Origin:

Muskie is actually a member of an ancient aquatic race which lives in a subterranean complex beneath Lake Michigan. He has come to the surface world to put a stop to the pollution which threatens to turn his underwater home into the next "Love Canal". Muskie obtained his knowledge of the surface world by participating in a religious ceremony which caused him to absorb the memories of Richard Strebe, an EPA Action Team member who got too close to proving that a consortium of industrial companies in the Chicago area was illegally dumping toxic chemicals into Lake Michigan and who was dumped in the lake himself with cement slippers. Muskie's mental make up now is an odd amalgam of his former self and Richard Strebe. This explains why Muskie has adopted Richard's girlfriend (Donna Spear), why he likes disco, why he hates fisherman (he swallowed a lure as a minnow), and why sushi is the staple of his diet even though Richard hated fish.

Roleplaying Notes:

Muskie has been a real fun critter to play. Some of his most memorable moments were...

- Running through a building wall so he could get to a villain inside the building in a 1/2 move.
- Grabbing a villainess, foaming at the mouth, and muttering "Give us a kiss?" as his presence attack soliloquy.
- Wrapping his fresh fish lunch in a newspaper article which scandalized the hero team he belongs to.
- Becoming a charter member of Chicago's most unusual superhero team, "The Untouchables".
- Bringing his own bus stop to the local disco.
- Getting free sushi at Sam's Sushi Shack.
- Finding metal pipes spewing pollutants into Lake Michigan and rolling them up like tooth paste tubes.

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/****************************************************************/
/* His Archtypical Gamemasters:                                 */
/****************************************************************/
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To follow up on my list of archtypical players in Motive #2 *I present* you with the following list of gamemaster (GM) types. Please note that GMs frequently exhibit more than one type of archtypical behavior and that many of the behaviors are closely linked.

> The Peckinpah
Quote: "Vidal's submachinegun blazes away at you. Three miniature crimson fountains spring to life from Fluffy's chest as her frail doggie body is driven into the dust by the successive impacts of three .45 slugs where it begins to convulse in its death throws."

> The Commander
Quote: "As Lord High NPC I tell you, sneaking in the back way is suicide."

> The Master of Luck and Fate
Quote: "You flee from the site of the ambush and as you round the next bend in the trail you are ambushed."

> The Darwinist
Quote: "The dice say that you died so you are dead. Maybe your next character will be better suited to handle this kind of situation."

> The Killer
Quote: "Escaping from the Mark IX Death Machine was a lucky move. It's too bad that you've stumbled onto 2 Bogus Monsters though. I've wiped several parties of gods with just one of these guys."

> The Masochist
Quote: "It feels good to be home after finally defeating the insidious and hateful evil cultists. As you walk from the living room to the kitchen you listen for Cleo's familiar meowing and

note that it is absent. Looking out the kitchen window as you wash your hands, you note that the poor Korean children playing next door look well fed."

> The Wargamer
  Quote: "The Orc leader turns to you and tells you that he has had enough of your prattle and that he is going to fight you until he fails a morale check or dies."

> The Old Faithful
  Quote: "What a coincidence. You're on patrol late one night when another amazingly blatant crime takes place right before your eyes. Please note, however, that the crime scene this week is the 31st National Bank and that the villains are wearing midnight blue instead of black."

> The Cult Figure
  Quote: "I know you like my campaign but I won't run 24 hours a day, 7 days a week."

> The Historian
  Quote: "There's nothing new in the world except for the history you don't know." - Harry Truman (paraphrased)

> The Grandstander
  Quote: "And the Lord High NPC says unto the lowly serf NPC... and the lowly serf replies ad nausium..."

> The Gameshow Host
  Quote: "This week's featured treasure is a +6 Dancing Sword. All you have to do is defeat the Megadeath Dragon and the +6 Dancing Sword is yours in addition to the mega experience you get for slaying the dragon. Good Luck."

> The Gameshow Hostess
  Quote: "Oh. I don't know what treasure is in the Megadeath Dragon's hoard. Why don't you roll it up?"

> The Genre Freak
  Quote: "What, you didn't realize that she was Jean Gray?"

> The Nth Player
  Quote: "Logan, my favorite character, will be accompanying you on this mission as an NPC."

> The GM with Significant Other
  Quote: "As Lord High NPC I trust that you will return my favors tit for tat."

> The Guilt Ridden (or Belittling) Apologizer
  Quote: "I'm sorry. I didn't realize that this scenario was too difficult and dangerous for you. We'll just say that everyone lived and I promise not to challenge you too much again."
  Note: Exact type depends on the intonation of the quote.

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/************************************************************/
/* His Simple v. Complex Game Systems:                      */
/************************************************************/
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The complexity of game systems on the market today varies considerably from Toon & Ghost Busters to the Hero System & Roll Master. Pardon me, I should have said Chart Master. What this means to the average gamer is that there are game systems which they will consider trivial and those which they will need an advanced degree to comprehend. Fortunately there are usually several game system offerings, varying in complexity, in each genre of roleplaying game. For example. Beginning superhero gamers will feel right at home with Marvel Superheros while initiation into the ranks of Champions players requires a ritual trial by character generation. There are, however, other factors which are as or more important to the decision of which game to play than your ability to assimilate rules.

The single most important factor for me when I choose a game to play is the "feel" of the game system. By this I mean that when I play or run "Dingoes & Donkeys" the rules should allow dingos to be dogs and donkeys to be asses. Furthermore the rules must be realistic within the context of the milieu. Thus I would cry "bogus" if the rules for "Dingoes & Donkeys", a mundane wild west RPG, say that my unskilled dingo cannot leap three feet into the air when unencumbered or that the donkey leaping proficiency with triple specialization allows my dingo to vault donkeys like an Olympian even with an anvil strapped to his back. There's nothing worse than a game that makes no sense at all. Fortunately rules can be changed to fix a broken game system. Unfortunately changing rules is frequently a Pandora's box.

The next factor I consider is the wargaming value of the system. If I want to fight giant robot battle royals with an occasional out of mech experience, Battletech and Mechwarrior are my systems of choice. If I want to fight giant robot skirmishes and have a character with a swinging social life then I will play Mekton. I know that some of you are saying to yourselves, "wargames, like barfo" but some of us still enjoy the gaming aspects of roleplaying games. In any event it is always advantageous to pick the least complex game which suits your *wargaming* and roleplaying tastes because simple games are easier to run, easier to teach, and are more likely to have play sessions which finish before the spouse thinks that you'*re about* to file for separation.

Another factor I consider when determining if a RPG system is worth using is bulk. I know that we all have seen game systems breed supplements and editions. First there was basic "Dingoes & Donkeys". Soon adept, grand adept, and divine "Dingoes & Donkeys" followed. Next "Abridged Dingoes & Donkeys" came along. Finally, after you had just completed your set of abridged books, "Abridged Dingoes & Dnkeys Superior Edition" is published with supplements. This game system has a lot of bulk which means that it costs a lot of money, has more rules than you can learn in a lifetime, and will eventually be useful as construction material for a paper mache addition to your home because you need the extra space to store it. Beware of simple games which turn into complex beasts with each cycle of publication.

The final factor I consider when determining which games I learn to play is popularity. Personally I might find PrunePursuit (a game in which miniature figs search for dates in Southern California) to be the best game ever. Unfortunately if the gamers in my area are constipated with "Dingoes & Donkeys" I had best join in with the dogs unless I want to run a solitaire campaign. It's unfortunate but that's the way it is. Unless you can find a good laxative.

As you can see I do not worry too much about the issue of simple v. complex game systems when I pick and choose RPGs. Frankly it seems obvious that the simplest game system which has the "feel", wargame value, bulk, and popularity I want is the game for me. After all, would you fill out a 1040A tax form with amendments instead of a 1040EZ unless it saves you money or the government makes you?

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/*************************************************************/
/* His Wish Fulfillment Characters in Response to Druid's    */
/*     Cauldron and Witch's Brew #2:                         */
/*************************************************************/
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I must confess that each character I design is a wish fulfillment character. I generally am unhappy playing in a long running campaign unless I can design my character for the role which I wish to play in the game. I realize that this is at least one step removed from Nicky's problem player's behavior but I believe that once I was much closer to the mark.

About 7 years ago I really felt the need to prove my self worth through gaming. I craved kudos and wanted to feel that I was the best at something even if it was only (?) a game. I did not have fun playing imperfect characters because each character inadequacy drove a dagger of failure into my gut. My character's behavior was not important to me because I was so preoccupied with the need to succeed that I was blind to the fact that my behavior was hindering me. Fortunately, over time, my fear of failure and feelings of inadequacy eroded and I became aware that man is a social animal.

Perhaps I would have matured faster if I received support from my gaming group. Maybe if my GM and fellow players tried and were able to guide me to success with a less than god like character I would have fared better. I cannot say. What I can say is that it's a troubled trail which Nicky's problem player treads.

HEMISPHERES

AJ Hoge

Formerly Runes, Ravens, and Reindeer. The title refers to the dual nature of my gaming preferences. On one hand I am an avid role-player. I have played D&D since I was in the 7th grade. I am primarily a DM. I enjoy RPGs because they demand creativity, intuition, and imagination. On the other hand, I am also a devout wargamer. I have been playing various wargames since the 11th grade. My favorites are Diplomacy and Russian Campaign. I enjoy these games because they demand careful, rational, analytical thought. Wargames provide a perfect contrast to RPGs (and vice versa) and so I prefer to switch between them. My entry will therefore be a double entry, part on D&D and part on wargames:

Dionysis

This section will contain three parts:

- Wheels Within Wheels- My DM philosophy
- Norse Campaign Overview
- Chaos- an overview

Wheels within wheels is a basic explanation of my DMing style: How I develop my world, my adventures, and my campaign. The Norse campaign overview will present some basic background and history. Chaos will be a description of the various forces and agents of chaos on Brightstar (my world), from the God of Chaos down to the common thief.

Wheels Within Wheels

My role as DM is to create a living breathing world in which the players can play.I role play all the Npcs who inhabit this world and develop all the events that occur in it. My goal is to create a world that lives, changes, and develops whether or not the characters play in it.

Central to this method is the idea of interacting forces. I have built into my world a host of interacting and opposing forces: religious (alignments), political, personal,....Each of these forces has a goal, a way of doing things, and a relation to the other forces in the world. Each such force will act and react to events in the world and the actions of other people (including the PCs). Thus almost any change or action of one force will effect another.

For example, lets say that the PCs- a force of good-, hear of an evil book of power and decide to go after it to destroy it. Lets say that knowledge of this book is fairly widespread. There would certainly be a complex and varied reaction to the news of this book. Chaotic forces might wish to obtain it (To sell or use), Various evil forces certainly would want it & would probably send a few people to get it. Some of these evil groups might be rivals, however, and thus could possibly aid the PCs. Any PC action will be met by a series of reactions: if the PCs buy out the Chaos force- what do the others do? Similarly, what if the PCs go it alone, or work with an evil faction, or hunt down each group one by one? Any PC action will have definite (& complex) consequences (including doing nothing). This method creates a world that is consistent and dynamic; one which contains many different forces, schemes, events, and plans below its surface.

The key to developing this kind of system is not to pre-plan adventures. By this I mean, dont pre plan events that will occur in the adventure (i.e. a big fight on top of the tower, or a confrontation with the big villian). Instead, set up a situation, develop the various forces that will take part in the situation, develop each of their plans and motives (& probable reaction to various possible events), and then let things go.

Another key to this method is not to try to pre-guess what the players will do. In my years of DMing I have found that it is nearly impossible to figure out what the players will do. There are two ways to deal with this unpredictability: 1. Try to steer the players towards certain actions/areas/events or 2. Dont worry about it. I prefer #2. Rather than worry about what the players will try & then try to figure out ways to get them to do what I want, I simply dont worry about it. If my NPCs and forces are developed enough, I will know how they will react to almost any PC action. By giving the NPCs definite goals and drives I free myself from being dependant on the PCs and make it easier for myself to improvise.

For example, the following is an event that occured in my campaign. I will compare my way of looking at it to the more manipulative method. The PCs heard that various people were disappearing from a forest. Upon investigation they found that undead were responsible. Upon further investigation they found that the leader of the forest, Tharian, had a rod that gave him the power to control undead. While developing the adventure I had determined that Tharian's forest was populated by a group of poor and weak humans who had accepted Tharian as their leader. Tharian's motive for using the rod was to increase the power of the forest and thus bring some measure of prosperity to "his people". Thus, though his methods were fairly evil, his intent was fairly noble. I fully expected the PCs to march in, have a big fight with Tharian and his minions, defeat him, and then listen to his pitiful story. This is not what they did. Instead, they defeated some of his minions and then requested negotiations, during which they discovered his true motives. They then used their connections with powerful nobles and royalty to aid Tharian's people- with the condition that he would cease using the rod. Now, if I had not developed Tharians motives (wether they be to aid his people or destroy the world) and had already decided that the PCs would fight him- I would have had to have found a way to steer them away from this action. Instead I let them try what they wanted to.

This brings me to the conclusion of this rather abstract piece. The basic aim of all of this is what I just stated: To allow the players to try anything they want. This method gives the players maximum freedom and flexibility. I find that most players enjoy this and prefer this to being manipulated. The end result: more interested players.

Well, enough about DMing philosophy and all that abstract stuff. It's time to take a look at the cold harsh world of the norsemen.

The Norselands

The Norselands lie to the far north of the continent of Brightstar-cut off from the south by the Fangtooth mountains, Garythane (an orc city), and the fleets of Lanaria (a strong ocean faring country). These lands are isolated, wild, and harsh. The Norse campaign is currently based on the southern shore of a land called Danaveld. The basis of this campaign is found in the mythology and culture of medieval Scandinavia (including Iceland). Much of the background was taken directly from the historical and mythological record, with little or no modifications. Of course, the background is not completely pure. This world is after all **my world** , and thus contains many additions, modifications, and alterations based on my ideas. For example, in the Norselands magic and monsters are real and occur much more often than they do in the legendary Norse tales. Furthermore, the legends and gods in the Norselands reflect my interpretations and views of Norse mythology and thus vary in their resemblance to the original/ historical models (yikes, that sentence belongs in a term paper). The disclaimer is now ended, onto the Divine denizens of the Norselands.

Norse Divinity: The Norse cosmos consists of 3 major levels. The upper level consists of Asgard and Jotunheim, the home of the Gods and Giants respectively. The middle level is Midgard, the home of men and the spawn of Gods and Giants. The lower level consists of Niflheim and Helheim, cold lifeless regions that house spirits, devils, and demons.

Asgard: Asgard houses the Gods and their minions. The gods include Odin, Thor, Frey, Sif, Loki, Baldar, and most of the other gods of Norse mythology. Of these gods, Odin, Thor, Frey, Sif, and Loki are the ones most often worshiped by men. Each of these gods has its own outlook and motivation, which corresponds more or less to the mythology. One of the unique things about the Norseland gods is that they personally intervene in the events of Midgard much more often than is typical. In game terms this means that heroes will recieve challenges, aid, and opposition from the gods much more regularly than usual. The gods are constantly looking after their concerns on Midgard and they are inclined to interfere with one another when it suits their purpose. Also in Asgard is Valhalla, the hall of the slain. In this hall lives the army of Odin, chosen warriors who were slain in battle. These warriors feast with Odin every night, and await Ragnarok- when they will ride forth to battle the giants.

Jotunheim: On Jotunheim reside the enemies of the Gods-- the Giants. These giants have power equal to the Gods and are not to be confused with the giant spawn that roam Midgard (some of which are called giants by men). The Giants seek to dominate Midgard and destroy/conquer Asgard. They are basically an evil lot.

Helheim and Niflheim: Niflheim and Helheim are below Midgard. In Helheim resides Hel- the maiden of death, disease, and old age. Hel's minions include the bitter souls and spirits of those who died by disease and age. Hel desires to claim more souls and spirits for Helheim. She has no plans of conquest, however, for her minions are incapable of great deeds. Niflheim is the residence of various malign spirits, demons, and devils. These creatures battle each other and all living things whenever possible. They desire the destruction or conquest of Asgard, Jotunheim, and Midgard.

Midgard: Midgard is the abode of men and their ilk. Since Midgard lies between the other regions it is often a testing or battleground for divine forces. On Midgard the minions of Gods, Giants, Spirits, Demons, and Devils struggle with each other to gain supremacy (or survival).

The Gods often work through men, manipulating them for their own purposes in order to gain power. Odin seeks strife, war, victories, and sacrifices-- for these things increase his power. He will sometimes choose and aid champions who will further these causes, but he will abandon them if they no longer suit his purposes (ie. if they build peace). Odin also works through his blessed warriors- the bareserks. The bareserks epitomize Odins unquenching desire for warfare. Finally, Odin works through seithmen (sorcerers) who sacrifice to him in order to gain some of the magical power and knowledge that Odin possesses. It should be noted that most of these agents do not realize that they are tools of Odin, therefore they do not necessarily cooperate & oftentimes they fight one another (even this strife serves Odin).

The agents and spawn of the Giants include Midgard giants, Ogres, Orcs, Niss, Goblins, Trolls, etc.....Some of these creatures actively worship and serve the Giants of Jotunheim while others are barely aware of their existance and serve only their own interests. In general, however, most of these creatures are hostile to men (and often each other). Of the above creatures, it is primarily the Midgard giants who directly serve and worship the Jotunheim Giants and are aware of their presence.

Hel has no actual agents, though a few creatures do offer sacrifices to her in return for death/disease magic. These creatures are generally considered to be disgusting and lowly by most other creatures. The Demons, Devils, and Spirits of Niflheim have more patrons than Hel, for their power is more concrete and destructive. They are served by various cults and cultists who spring up, offering sacrifices in exchange for dark and wicked powers. The forces of Niflheim manipulate and guide these cults in order to obtain their goals and desires.

Thus ends a very broad overview of the Divinity of my Norse campaign. If there is interests I could go into more depth at a later time-- focusing on specific Gods/Giants/Cults/Practices/Whatever or I could give an overview of the major political/military powers of men. Now on to Chaos.

Chaos in Brightstar

The God of Chaos on Brightstar is Kerak. He is the god of total freedom, randomness, and change. He teaches that there is no morality and that individuals should be free to choose anything they wish. He teaches that Chaos offers endless possibilities compared to the stagnant oppression of Law. Kerak values the freedom and strength of the individual over the voice of society as a whole. His priests are taught to be personally strong and must be highly individualistic. (It should be noted that Chaos on Brightstar is not evil and does not resemble the Elric/Runequest viewpoint).

The Avatar of Kerak is Ulfius. An Avatar is a divine creature of great power that acts as a representative of the God on Brightstar. Ulfius appears as a man with disheveled brown hair, and impish face, and average build. He wears a scintillating cloak and always carries a deck of cards. For centuries he was imprisoned by the forces of Law, but recently he was freed. Ulfius now roams Brightstar, dishing out chaotic and bizarre fates to all he encounters.

Ulfius was the creator of Teneron, the Chaos city. Teneron is a city of insane geometry, bright colors, and total freedom. It has no leaders or rulers. Fortunately it lies on the border of the Kingdom of the Crown, a bastion of Law and Order. Thus, the Kingdom and the city constantly clash with one another. Day after day chaotic masses flock to the city, feeding its armies and maintaining the menace to the Kingdom.

The church of Kerak at one time had a strong leader - High Priest Intrah Monar. Upon the release of the Avatar (Ulfius), however, things changed. Ulfius felt that the church was too ordered so he lay waste to the Holy city (Carselan) and shattered Intrah Monar's power. Currently the church has no one leader, and is in effect a coalition of a number of local priests.

The primary worshipers of Kerak include those who are independant, strong willed, or who desire freedom. Kerak priests have long recruited heavily from the poor, thieves, and the opressed, offering them freedom, power, and wealth. In fact the Kerak church has been responsible for helping many people whom society has forgotten. Of course the Kerak church gains from helping these people, for they offer a large supply of desperate and determined worshipers and agents.

The goals of the Kerak priests are many and varied. In general though, most of their activities include Aiding and recruiting from the oppressed, Overthrowing Lawful governments & religions (and since most governments are lawful they are a constant threat, for ultimately Kerak desires the elimination of all government), and increasing the size and power of their worshipers and the Kerak church.

Apollo

The following section will be the wargame section. First of all I have a few questions which I would like to see answered in reader comments. 1) Do any Motive readers actually play wargames (other than Warhammer)? 2) I so, what are your favorites and how often do you play? 3) Does anyone play & enjoy any of the following- Diplomacy, Civilization, Caesar at Alesia, Caesar's Legions, WS&IM, War & Peace, Napoleon at Bay, Third Reich, Russian Campaign, 1776, Third World War, or Conquest? Since I dont really know the answers to these questions at this time, I will avoid writing about any specific strategies. This section will contain two parts:

- Conquest- Review & Overview
- The Indirect Approach

The Conquest review will discuss the basic rules, style, and overall strategy of Conquest. The Indirect Approach will be a discussion on how to apply the theory of the same name (as developed by BH Liddel Hart) to wargaming.

Conquest

Conquest was developed to be a more interesting, complex, and exciting version of chess. The game is played on a symetrical board that is shaped like a series of islands. Each player starts out with an identical force on opposite ends of the board. Each player has both land and sea pieces. Land pieces include men, elephants, calvary, and chariots. Men move slowly, while elephants, calvary, and chariots all move quickly. The neat thing about these pieces is that they combine. Elephants can carry two men and Chariots can carry one man. This increases the mobility of your force. Sea forces include ships and galleons. Ships move slower than galleons. Both kinds of sea pieces can carry land pieces (up to an elephant and 2 men).

Capturing is done as in chess, you simply capture the enemy by moving into a space he occupies- taking everyone in the space (if the enemy is combined you take all his pieces with your one piece). After you take a piece the enemy is allowed a free counter attack if s/he has a piece within two spaces of the attacked space. Thus it is best to keep pieces together so they can defend each other.

The object of the game is to either eliminate all your opponents land forces or to capture his castle (hard to do). So far I have only played this game three times, but I had a lot of fun. The game is very challenging and requires very careful thinking. One major mistake can cost you the game. I have learned a few basic things from my first games: a) Keep your men together b) Take advantage of your fleet as soon as possible c) Don't be too defensive.

Well, that's it, a basic overview of Conquest. Conquest is made by a small company in California. If anyone is interested, I have the info required to order the game. The same company also makes a four player version of Conquest (tons of fun, I've played it once).

The Indirect Approach

The indirect approach was developed by BH Liddel Hart, a British strategist who wrote before, during, and after WWII. Shortly after WWI he predicted the role of the tank and blitzkreig in warfare, and urged the British to adopt his strategies. He has written many books about general strategy, WWII, and military history. His book, *Strategy,* is short, concise, and easy to apply to wargames. It is available at many fine bookstores all over the US, Canada, and Europe (order today).

The core of the indirect approach is very simple- avoid direct attacks upon the enemy. Inherent in this strategy is to always avoid your opponents positions of strength. Don't attack his strong points even if you are also strong. Instead, concentrate on manuevering your strength against his weak points. The key is to hit the weak points with an irresistable force and then exploit through the point of attack. This seems fairly basic but it is often forgotten by wargamers. Too often wargamers get bogged down in wars of attrition, failing to fully exploit weakness in the opponents defense. Another common mistake is to to attack the enemie's strength in hopes of eliminating his/her strongest force. This is usually extremely costly and often it fails miserably.

Another thing to remember is that the shortest/most obvious course is usually not the best. Determine what your opponent's expectations are and then do what s/he doesn't expect. Attack through mountains, swamps, etc.. in order to surprise your opponent and get at flanks. Remember, men are tougher than any terrain. Better to suffer in terrain to get at a weakness than to assault a strong force in easier terrain.

It is also very important to confuse and surprise your opponent. This is really what is meant by indirect. The indirect is that which is not obvious and is thus unexpected. Take every chance you can to disguise your intent, mislead your opponent, and bluff the enemy. Try to get him/her to overcommit forces or to divide them, while always keeping yours in striking range of many targets. Don't let your opponent realize your intent until it is too late.

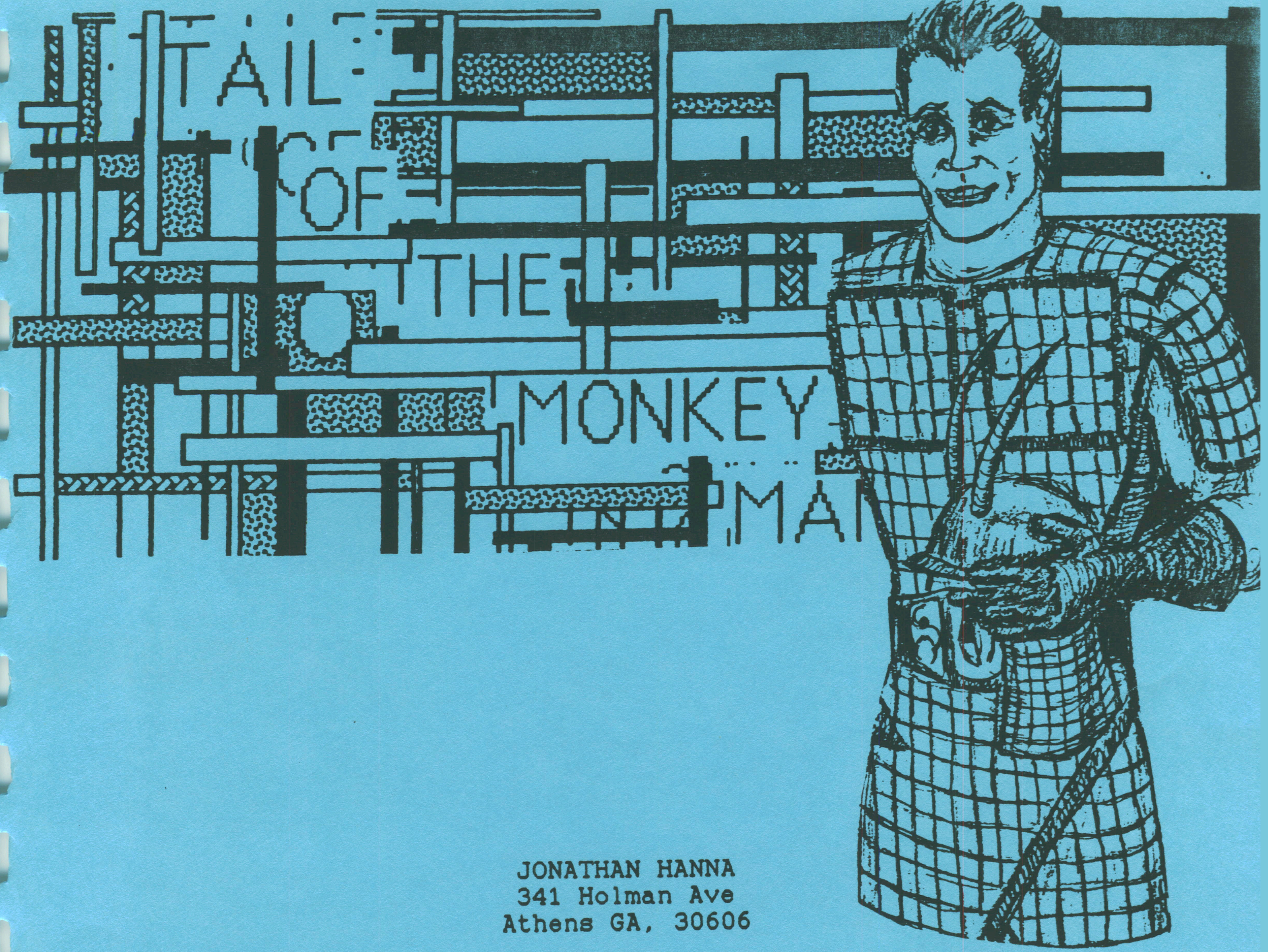
For example, BH Liddel Hart describes the strategy of putting your opponent on the "horns of a dilemma". I'll use a War & Peace example. The French army is invading Russia- intent on conquering the country. In order to do so the French player must capture both St. Petersburg (Leningrad) and Moscow. It is, however, hard to do this in one year- so you must go after one & then weather the winter until you can attack again in the spring. So how do you prevent the Russians from putting up a stiff defense & doing to you what was done to Napoleon? Put him/her on the horns of a dilemma. Push into Russia at a point between the two cities and drive inward. Use calvary to threaten one or the other city & try to force the Russian to commit to one city. Then attack the other one. If s/he does not commit, his/her force will be divided, so you can attack at the last instant and crush one city before the other city can aid their comrades. I've done this before and it works beautifully. Of course, this idea can be applied to any game, from Caesar's Legions to WWIII.

Another possible strategy is to use modified guerilla tactics. The plan is to use a small group of very mobile men to harass the enemy. The intent is to force him/her to draw off a fairly large force in order to catch the guerilla units. When s/he draws off the men a weakness will be created, one that should be immediately exploited. You can use this strategy repeatedly to constly wear down your opponent.

I use the above strategy in Russian Campaign. As the Russian I start out with a very inferior force. I have no hope of directly attacking the Germans, yet a good strategist is never passive. Instead I use modified guerilla tactics. I deposit a weak calvary unit in the swamp to harass the Nazi supply lines. I also leave a few weak men in the mountains & woods. In order to catch and eliminate these men the Nazi must devote critical manpower, which blunts the sharpness of his/her initial attack. The delay is more than enough to give me time to prepare my winter counter attack. Even after winter, I continue to employ harassing troops in order to thin the German lines and create weaknesses. Eventually, the endless series of counter attacks takes its toll- forcing the Germans to retreat.

Thus concludes this issue of my Motive entry. I'd be interested in hearing what RPG ideas, wargames, and strategies everyone else is interested in.

Experience to Extremes



JONATHAN HANNA
341 Holman Ave
Athens GA, 30606

Author's Disclaimer: I hereby take no responsibility for any misspellings, grammatical errors, or mistakes of any kind in this document. I am merely the vessel through which a greater force is writing this paper. Any mistakes are therefore solely the product of that twisted and maladjusted mind. Similarly, if anyone is offended by the ideas brought forth in this paper, remember, you could have flipped the page at any time. No one forced you to read it. I will, however, take any and all credit for the parts you like.

Issue Three Includes:

1. Yes. You guessed it. Mailing comments.
2. After much hoopla and controversy, The Minutemen are here. Read all about it.
3. Forget all that fork on the left crap. Just try to avoid the chopsticks through the brain as Sersus keeps you up to date on Edge Etiquette.

THOSE PESKY MAILING COMMENTS

COVER - Good job Jon.
DEATH TO ALL FANATICS - Here's a comment on Null's anti-mailing comments stance. (I'm actually writing this to all the other Motive members, since Null won't be reading this due to it being a mailing comment.) I for one thought that the purpose of Motive was to give us all a public forum for expressing our views, opinions, and inspirations regarding gaming and such. A necessary part of this is getting feedback on what we have written. How are we going to know if we have said something brilliant, or brilliantly stupid unless we hear about it from our fellow Motive writers. Since this APA is public, then all of the comments should be public also. I find that I gain much insight on someone else's writing by reading what you others have to say about it. It can only help me to form my opinions on a subject if I hear as many other opinions as I can. If you have nothing to say about someone's piece, that is fine. Say nothing. If, however you do find that you have something to say to someone about what they have written, then you should write it up for us all to see. That was the whole point of this thing to begin with. Also, I agree that gaming should be the primary focus of Motive. This is not to say that gaming should be the ONLY focus. I enjoyed the fiction that was presented last time (see my mailing comments) and I hope to see more. Long live Motive in all its glorious splendor.

With regards to your various characters, I can only ask, "How can you remember all of this stuff?" I've forgotten 95% of everything I've ever done in games. Brain power is good. The real question is how did you come up with all of those names?
I would suggest that Psypher stay away from Ward Major/Minutemen, we seem to always run into magic chumps.

To Void I can only say that I've always wanted to keep a good record of the games that I've been involved in, and it looks like you want the same thing. Good.
THE GAMING SPOUSE - I personally enjoy having a Brown noser in games that I run. It makes things easier. The story was good. Was it based on events from an actual game? I've often thought that some of the games I've been in would make great books.
WHITE NOISE - Good God Jon. I really hate those guys. That is, I really hate those guys that write government documents. PRIMUS sucks eggs. My favorite bit of dialogue, "Water falling..., Twang, Thwipp."
THE CHEM GEEK - I've had questions about the roleplaying aspect of Warhammer. How would Warhammer work if you used a different system for the roleplaying, and Warhammer for the grand battles?
THE GAME IS A FOOT - Or is that, The Game Is A Guy With A Dictionary Fetish? The musical answer is, "Yes".
THE BLUE VIEW - Hmm, now this is interesting. All I can say is, if I found out that another player in a game had deliberately killed my character, I would punch them in the mouth (The player, not the character). At the very least I would never play a game with them again. T.A.F. is as amusing as ever.
DRUIDS CAULDRON/WITCHES BREW - Boy, you really hit the nail's

head when you talked about the wits NPC. I hate playing in games where the NPC's do everything. That is why in a game I ran once, Bloodstone, the man who is one of the most coordinated, graceful, and surefooted people on the planet tripped on a basketball court and knocked himself cold. Please GMs, let the players do what has to be done.

BOLTS OF BEDEVILMENT - At last, the one and only Amperion. CRUDD lives!

FISHY BITS - Unfortunately I missed both games that ya'll ran when you were here in Athens. One day, hopefully, I'll get the chance to have my entrails pulled out by one of your creations. Sersus doesn't know, Why do cavemen drag their women around by the hair?

COLUMN IN SEARCH OF A CLEVER HEADING - I don't know, but I think that you might just have one this issue, AARRGGHH!!

THE SNAKE OF FOREVER - Interesting. It would be great if the next chapter was longer. I was just getting into it when it was over. Two months is a long time to wait between installments.

SECRETS OF VULCAN POETRY REVEALED - Having played along side all the characters presented herein, I can say that its good having them around. The layout of all of this was a tad difficult to follow. (Welcome to Kinkos, land of the funky inept people)

THE IMPERIAL ELVIS POST - What can be said about the hero of our age? Manifest destiny is alive and well in South Dakota. By the way, that wasn't some no name gadgeteer who mind controlled Thew, that was the one and only Braino. I want to play some more Star Wars.

EASY VS COMPLEX

Last issue I posed the question, "Easy game systems vs complex game systems. Which, if either, are better?" Now I'll give my opinion.

My contention in any role-playing game is that the plot is more important than whatever game system it is that your using. I'll gladly play AD&D if the plot is good. This generally means that whenever the game system intrudes on the pace or plot of the game, I'm unhappy. much of this can be attributed to not knowing all of the rules of the game you're using. This intrusion of game system has never occurred more than when I've played Rolemaster. Any system in which it takes a multiple of hours to generate a basic character already has problems. I've been playing Rolemaster for years, and there are still things I don't understand. I still play it because I enjoy the group and the situations that have arisen, but it is not one of my favorite systems. I won't go so far as to say that the simpler a game is the better, but I will say that a game can really lose some appeal if it pays too much attention to detail.

P.S. Don't try and tell me that Champions is as complex and time consuming as Rolemaster. Generating a character for Champions can be as easy as you want it to be. Also, everything in Champions, from character creation to running combat is based off of simple math. Its easy. (Yes, Champions is my favorite system).

Atlanta

SEPTEMBER 1990 $200

THE

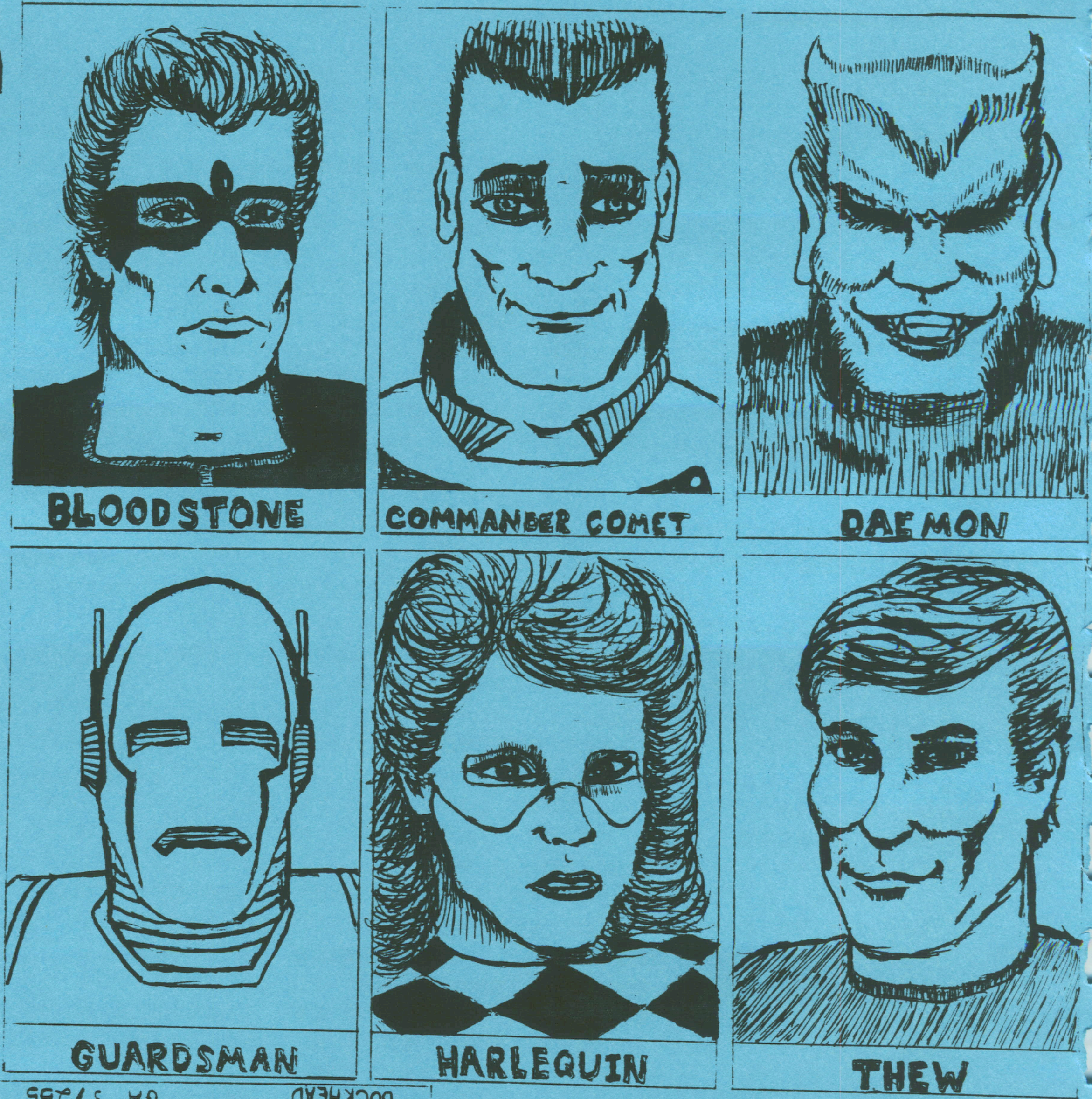
MINUTEMEN

Are They Atlanta's New Hope, Or Are They The Beginning Of The End?

So Why Do The Braves Suck So Bad?

Ted Turner's New 24 Hour Super Station: PNN The Para-Normal Network

Glanville Fever: Falcons Fly Finally


BLOODSTONE
COMMANDER COMET
DAEMON
GUARDSMAN
HARLEQUIN
THEW

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ADAM PETERSON
401 NEWHOUSE RD
BUCKHEAD GA 37255

UTEMEN

ATLANTA'S BOON OR BUST

THE MINUTEMEN
ATLANTA'S BOON OR BUST

Vincent Johns

Atlanta will be the home city for a new "Global Response, Independent Hero Team." This news has been met with a mixed reaction from the public and private sector, but it seems that regardless of the criticism, The Minutemen are here. The Minutemen are a group of heroes, mostly made up of the disbanded Ward Major organization, who will be based in Atlanta. The group will consist of the Thew, Harlequin, Commander Comet, Daemon, Bloodstone, and Guardsman. Whether they call themselves The Minutemen, Ward Major, the Sentinels or whoever, the individuals who make up this group have been involved in some of the most important events of the past few years. During Dr. Destroyer's recent attack on humanity, it was this group of heroes who put a stop to him.

The reason that Ward Major disbanded is generally believed to be due to the much publicized "Execution Style" killing of the villain Masster. This event which occurred at the Omni, and was covered live by CNN, has been seen by most of the nation. A legal Maelstrom has been set off by this event regarding the culpability of a paranormal who has multiple personalities, or even multiple bodies. The unique physical make up of a being known as Sir Cobb McCraw, who was not a member of Ward Major, but who actually killed Masster, has set off a flurry of legal activity. Due to Ward Major's active participation in the fight they have also come under fire. A stern "No comment" had been their only response to questions regarding the event. The legal question of culpability is still tied up in the courts. The office of Hamilton Pendergrast, the Thew, has been the major defender of paranormal rights in these proceedings.

On the same day as the fight at the Omni, the base of Ward Major was destroyed. A villainous inventor named Dr. Gizmo mistook the Ward Major house for a summer cottage of his normal antagonists, the New York based group called the Champions. Dr. Gizmo apparently caused a large cube of a substance which has been dubbed "Space Titanium" to fall on the house. Two deaths were reported from this incident. The victims were the pop musician Tali, and a french paranormal named the Flying Frog. The two were crushed flat along with the rest of the house. Bloodstone called the event, "Tragic. All of my stuff was in that house. Oh, and, uh, Tali was killed too. Tragic."

Following these events Ward Major disbanded, although the members have been seen together on a few occasions. The reorganization of the group has come about in recent weeks. A main reason given for the new team was to prevent situations such as the recent train wreck caused by a group of villains at the MARTA station on North Peachtree. The heroes held a contest on Atlanta radio stations to come up with a new name, and The Minutemen was the name selected by the group. Boris Jones of Dunwoody was the winner.

This group, although consisting of basically the same makeup as Ward Major, has a new agenda. They consider themselves a global response team, although they will be aware of situations in Atlanta. They are an independent group, with no parent organization backing them. It is not known who was supporting Ward Major, but The Minutemen will not have that backing.

The announcement of this new team has brought forth varied reaction from Atlanta residents. Burt Norton, an ad executive said, "I moved to Atlanta from New York to get away from this kind of thing. Wherever there are superheroes, there's going to be supervillains. I had two BMW's destroyed in these fights. I guess I'll head down to Jacksonville now. I don't think there are any of those guys down there." Sue Brown, a Georgia Tech student said, "I think it's great. Superheroes give Atlanta an international appeal. Besides, I think that Comrade Amerika is cute." When told that Comrade Amerika was not in the group, but Commander Comet is, she was not as excited, but still showed support. Former mayor Andrew Young has only praise for The Minutemen. "If we get the Olympics in 1996, Atlanta is going to need the type of protection that these people offer. They aren't government based, so it won't cost the taxpayers a cent for them to be here."

While it's true that Atlantans won't have to pay salaries for The Minutemen, other costs may be accrued by their very presence. Dave porelli, owner of Dave's Disco Junction is worried. "My place is only one block from where they're putting their base, or headquarters, or whatever they're calling it. I got a call from my insurance company telling me that my rates would increase next year. They didn't have to tell me why. It's cause of those -------'s down there. They think they own the ----ing planet." The property damage caused in conflicts between superheroes can be extensive. Estimates from Athens, where Ward Major was based is that between three and four million dollars of damage was done to personal and public property while they were there. Jeff Weathers of Weathers' Construction Co. in Athens says, "Hell, I'm putting my three girls through college off of what I made from rebuilding the Ward Major house back together again so many times. My wallet really suffered when that space titanium fell from the sky." Athens resident Bob *Brown says,* "I'm sorry to see them go. Sure there was some danger, but there was also excitement. How many people can say that they saw someone like the Thew at a place like the 40 Watt."

The Minuteman base is being built directly across from the Atlanta PRIMUS building. PRIMUS officials are supportive of the new group. Atlanta's self proclaimed "Defender of the defenseless", Radion, has had no real reaction. "They can set up shop here if they want, but I don't think that Atlanta needs them with me here." Statistics may disagree. Atlanta has become the crime capital of the U.S. Some city officials hope that a new presence in the city will help.

The Minutemen have been set up as a loose organization. They will not live in the base, as with Ward Major. They will not hold regular weekly meetings. "We will get together as the need arises" says Bloodstone, the groups first leader. Some see Bloodstones role as leader surprising considering that the Thew

BURGER KING

John Spink/Staff

1990: Atlanta's new police chief gets a hug Monday from his mother, Willie Ruth Glass,

Jonathan Newton/Staff

How 'bout that? Falcons head coach Jerry Glanville celebrates

ATLANTA REACTS TO THE MINUTEMEN

is in the group. The Thew was Ward Major's leader for their entire existence. "Well," says Bloodstone, "The group decided to elect leaders who would only have power for a short period, about a year I guess. For whatever reason they elected me. I'm sure that Thew will be back at the head in the future. Besides, I think that his personal life may be more important to him right now."

Regardless of whether one is pro or con on The Minutemen, it seems certain that the future of Atlanta will be in some ways tied to their's. The hope is that it will be a mutually productive situation.

QUESTIONS FROM THE MAN ON THE STREET

BLOODSTONE

What the toughest fight you've ever had?

"Well, from time to time in our business we fight somebody who can force you to do things against your will. I seem to be a favorite among these mind controlling types. The toughest fights I've had are when I'm forced to fight the other *members of the* team. They're hard to beat!"

How did you become a superhero?

"I can't really answer that right now."

Do you like Atlanta?

"Yes. I'm very familiar with the Atlanta area, and I really feel at home here. I'll probably find a residence around here somewhere."

DAEMON

What's the difference between Ward Major and The Minutemen?

"Ward Major was an interim status for Thew, Harlequin, and Impact after their leaving Triangle Geochemical. The group only took on a cohesive flavor and name when it was joined by Bloodstone and myself. Originally it was just a place for Thew, Harlequin, Impact and Siren to hang out, relax, and get messages. About the time we reorganized Ward Major to suit certain purposes of our own, we were joined by Polythemus, Sparks, and Lugh. Ward Major tended to deal with situations that the common person on this planet would tend to think of as totally unbelievable.

The Minutemen are formed by Bloodstone, Commander *Comet*, Guardsman, Harlequin, Thew, and myself to aid the conventional law enforcement establishment in the prevention and containment of criminal paranormal activities, and in disasters of a natural or unnatural nature."

Just what are you?

"I am an Initiate to the mysteries and ways of Cernan. Cernan is a "Divine Being" dwelling on another plane of reality who represents the forces of Nature and Wildness. He most closely resembles Sylvanus of Celtic/Druidic worship."

What is your relationship with Atlanta's religious community?

"I have no relationship with the religious community of Atlanta. The vast majority of persons who maintain a religious affiliation in this region are blind fools following either naive simpletons, or untrustworthy cheats and swindles. This same vast majority has so little real faith in their historically inaccurate doctrines that they keep changing their minds and holy texts on a nearly yearly fashion.

GUARDSMAN

How do you stay cool and keep your armor from smelling bad?

"Deodorant soap and Right Guard keep the smell down. As to the cooling system, it's based off of NASA cooling technology. You can hardly beat the work that they have done."

What's the difference between being in a team, or being an agent for UNTIL?

Obviously there is more equality in decision making when you are in a team such as The Minutemen. It is also appealing to work with good friends such as the Thew, Bloodstone, Harlequin and the others.

Where can I get some armor?

"Try to pick up some used PRIMUS armor, or maybe some old VIPER parts. It would not be feasible to mass produce the Guardsman armor, due to the extremely high production costs. You must understand that the current Guardsman armor is on it's fifth revision."

THEW

Who have you hit the hardest? Who has hit you the hardest?

"You could ask Mechanon, but that version is dead now (with a little help from Firewing.) As to the latter, bad press."

How do you feel about not being elected leader?

"First of all I would like to say that Bloodstone is a fine man and a good leader. I plan to enjoy being out of the hot seat for awhile. Besides S.P.A.C., Thew Inc, and Vic...uh, other interests give me enough to do."

Are your fights real, or are they fake like wrestling?

"Its pretty hard to choreograph having Space Titanium dropped on your house! And kids, don't try these stunts at home. Leave it to the professionals, the Minutemen. Oh, and God bless America. And remember, THEW WANTS YOU!!"

HARLEQUIN

What's it like being the only female in the group?

"Interesting. It gives me a certain power."

What do you do for a social life?

"Lie on the beach. Flirt with fans."

What do the guys look like without their costumes on?

"Naked."

COMMANDER COMET

How do you like America?

"America is a complex country. I like American people very much, and many American superheroes have helped me to adapt. Sometimes American society can be unfair to the underdogs. In Russia everybody is more equal."

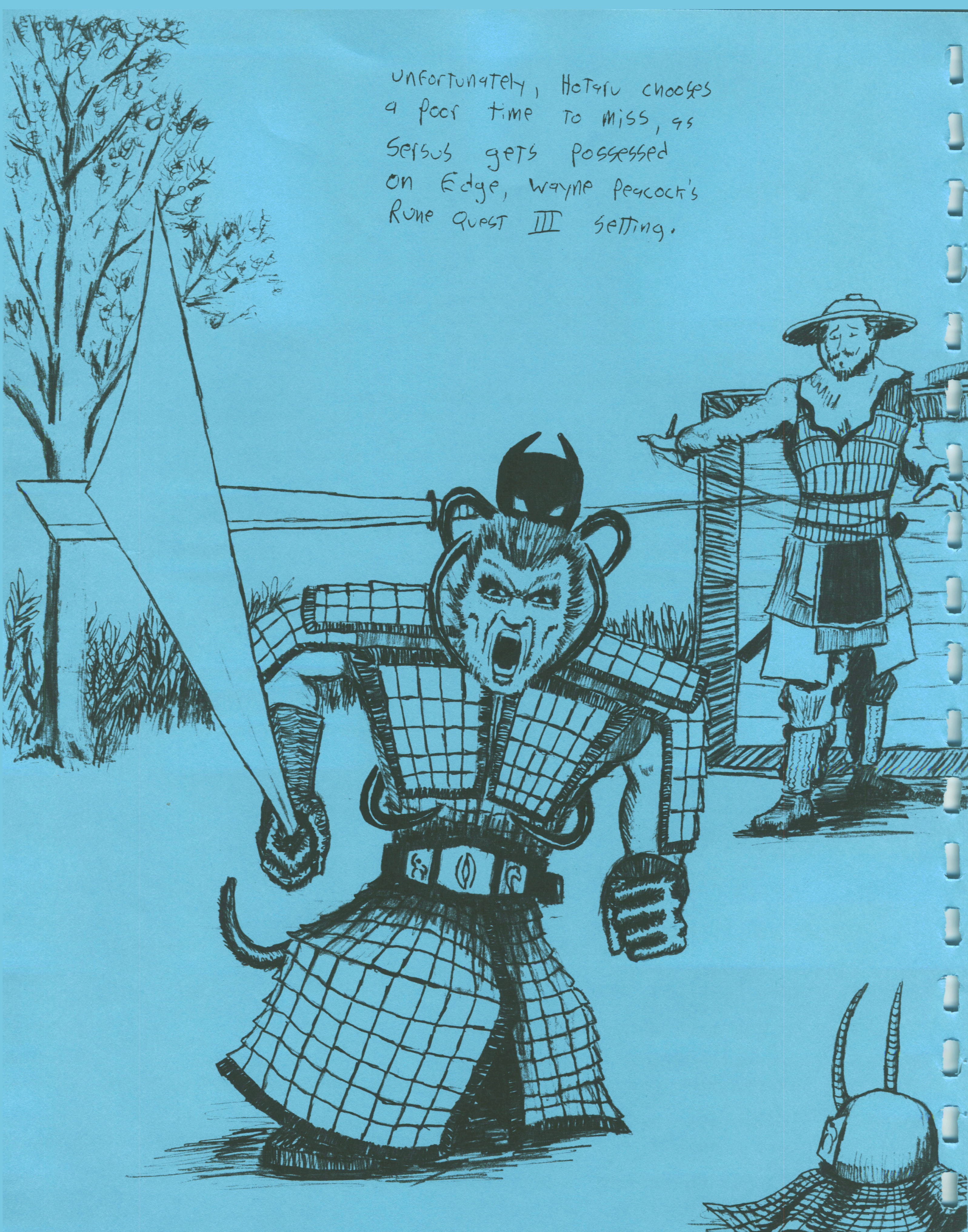
What do you miss most about the USSR?

"In American Georgia the winter is very boring. Also, the food, too spicy here. I miss beets."

How do you feel about working along side such famous heroes as Thew and the others?

"Thew and the other Minutemen are making my life as a superhero possible. At first I tried to follow the example of your comic books, but they do not seem very realistic, so now I ask my new tovarischi when I have doubts as to the correct 'super' behavior."

Unfortunately, Hotaru chooses a poor time to miss, as Sersus gets possessed on Edge, Wayne Peacock's Rune Quest III setting.



LIFE IS BESTIAL, AND SO AM I

Thoughts By Sersus, The Monkey Warrior

ETIQUETTE ON EDGE

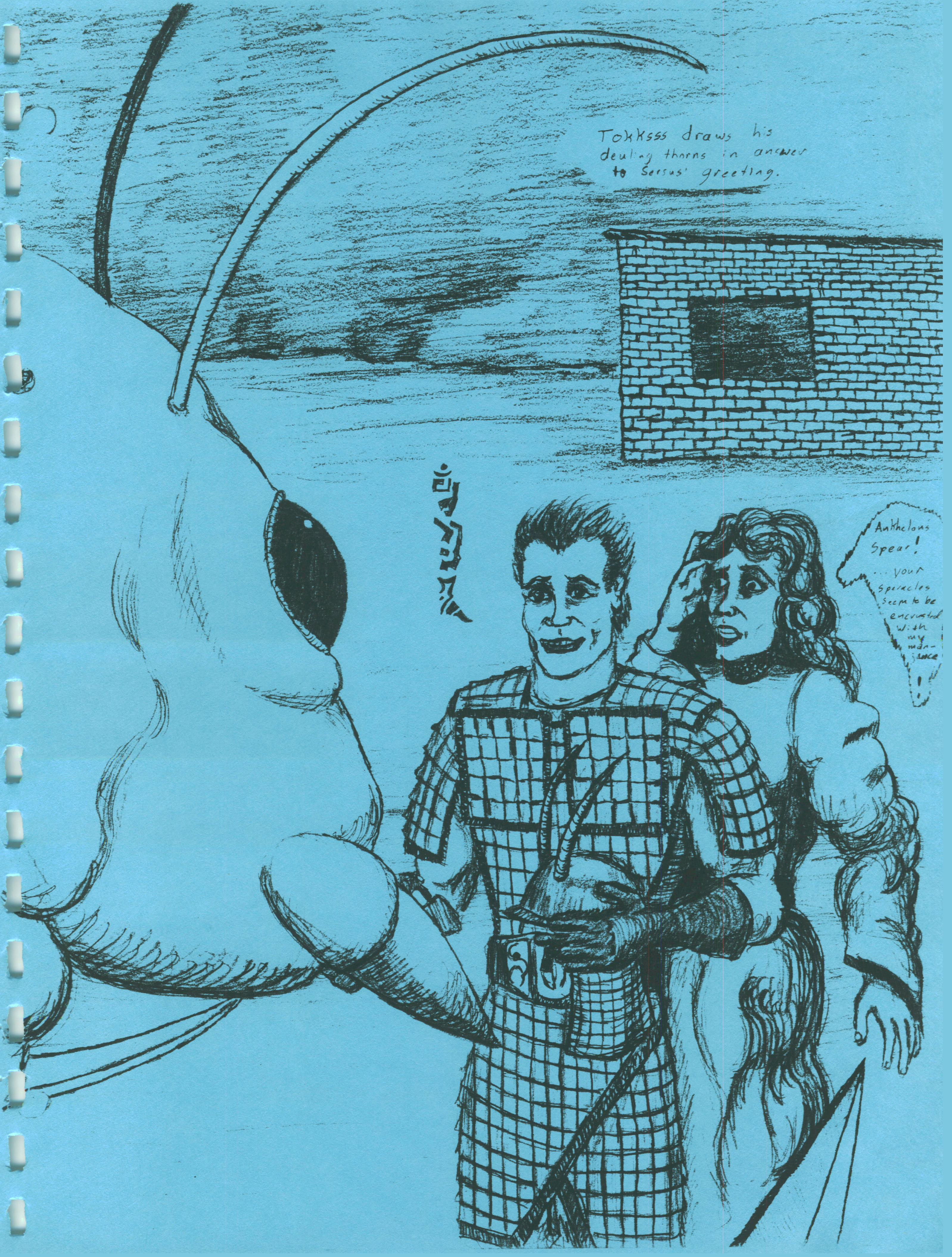
Life's tough man. If it's not one thing trying to kill you, it's another. If you're not being challenged to a duel, then some woman's trying to bash your head in. To make it even more difficult, there are all sorts of rules and shit, that if you don't follow, you're going to end up with about 90 clanswords up your wazoo. People are serious about their rules and customs on Edge. Don't mess with a guy's sword. Don't call somebody's clan a mass of flies swarming on the ylen shit. Don't do this, don't do that. If there's one thing about life on Edge, it's that you simply "don't". Here's a handy guide that could just keep you from making a social slip that might get your ass killed.

First and foremost, there are about 19,000,000,000 clans on Edge. Sure, there are only a few really big clans, and only a very few achieve true greatness, like the legendary White Wolf Clan in Nereth. Unfortunately, no matter how seemingly small and worthless a clan might be, they all think that they're the greatest thing since fried shit biscuits. All of these clans are willing to fight to uphold their clan honor. The best thing to do with regards to all of these clans is to follow some pretty standard rules. Here are some situations that you want to avoid when dealing with any of the clanned persons on Edge, which is most of the human population, as well as a few of the other races as well. One: Don't call the clan head a "Dick Head". This will piss them off every time. Two: Don't try to score with the clan mother. The clan mother is usually an older woman, although not always, who's job it is to make sure the clan propagates itself. You would think that with a job like that, that they would be ripe for some religious fervor. This is generally not the case, and it would serve you best to just avoid the whole situation. Three: Don't, and I mean DON'T steal a clan's clan bell. Law, clans get real uptight when somebody starts messing with their bell. The Jackals, may Shalmain piss on their women, found out what a mistake fucking with the Monkey's clan bell is. Four: If you are unlucky enough to be a lowly unclanned slob, then it would be best if you just avoided clanned people. Most clanned folks get the big head around the unclanned. Even small, backwater clans like to pick on the unclanned. If an unclanned person is around a bunch of clanned people, he shouldn't start voicing anti-clan propaganda. Clanned people love to teach respect to the unclanned, and the teaching can be rough. Five: Always agree to fight if you are challenged to a duel. Clanned people generally fight duels with people who they think have offended them. If you don't fight the duel, then you are regarded as having no honor or merit, and the person will generally attack you anyway. Your clan will also lose face if you decline a duel challenge. The best thing to do is to accept the challenge and beat the guy's ass. Duels are usually not to the death, unless you pissed somebody off real bad, like by calling his clanhead a dick head or something. Finally, when dealing with a clanned person, don't make fun of his clansword. Even if the sword has a really stupid looking mon, don't walk up to the guy and say, "Damn! I've seen gangrene that looks better than that fucking thing! Shit! That "sword" looks worse than the titties on your clan mother! And that's saying something! Damn!" If you say something like this to the normal clanned person, he or she might not even bother to challenge you to a duel. A quick recap on clans: Don't make fun of their clanheads, clan bells, swords, or titties.

Another area where one might want to exercise a goodly amount of respect is when one is dealing with the Autocrat. This is really kind of the same thing as dealing with the clans, but on a larger scale. The Autocrat is the ruler of Edge, and would really get pissed if one didn't show the proper deference to her position. Even the great clans have to give her their allegiance. here's some tips if you ever find yourself in her presence. First, don't speak unless spoken to. Next, don't say anything real stupid. Lastly, leave immediately if she looks at you with a look that says "leave immediately". The punishment for offending the Autocrat can be real damn severe. I don't mean it to sound like I think she's a bitch, I don't. She is, however, a very important person who needs to keep an aura of respect about her.

When dealing with some of the other races around you need to be careful. Some things which are not considered offensive to humans, are very offensive to other races. I've already touched on how humble the Thridd are in a previous article. The Thridd have some real interesting customs and games. One word of warning, never grab a Thridd's balls unless he offers them to you. If he does allow you to handle them, hold the balls in your palms reverently, and then throw them to the ground. When they are on the ground, look at them as if they are the greatest balls in the world. I've never been asked to play with a Thridd's balls, unfortunately, but I'm still hoping. When talking to a Thridd in his own language, I always try to smile and nod pleasantly. They respond to calmness. As for the other races, never offer a Yzir old meat. They like it fresh and raw. I wouldn't make a big deal out of eating vegetables in front of them, either. They will probably laugh at you for being a lowly plant eater. The Goblins are a great race as far as order and politeness go. I once asked a goblin if he would mind if I took an extra chair at a table he was sitting at. he looked at it, picked it up, and ate it. "Chair? What chair?" he growled. Laughingly I punched him in the mouth, knocked him out of his seat, and took the chair he had been in. When I sat down he came over and bought me a beer. Of course he ate the goblet before I could drink the beer that was in it, but what the Law, we all had a great time. I'm not really sure what that story had to do with Goblins and their etiquette, but I think it means that until a race can actually spell etiquette, it can be assumed that they don't worry about it.

Believe it or not, there are even polite ways to fight. Now


Tokksss draws his deuling thorns in answer to Sersus' greeting.
Ankhelons Spear! ... your Speracles seem to be encrusted with my man-jance!

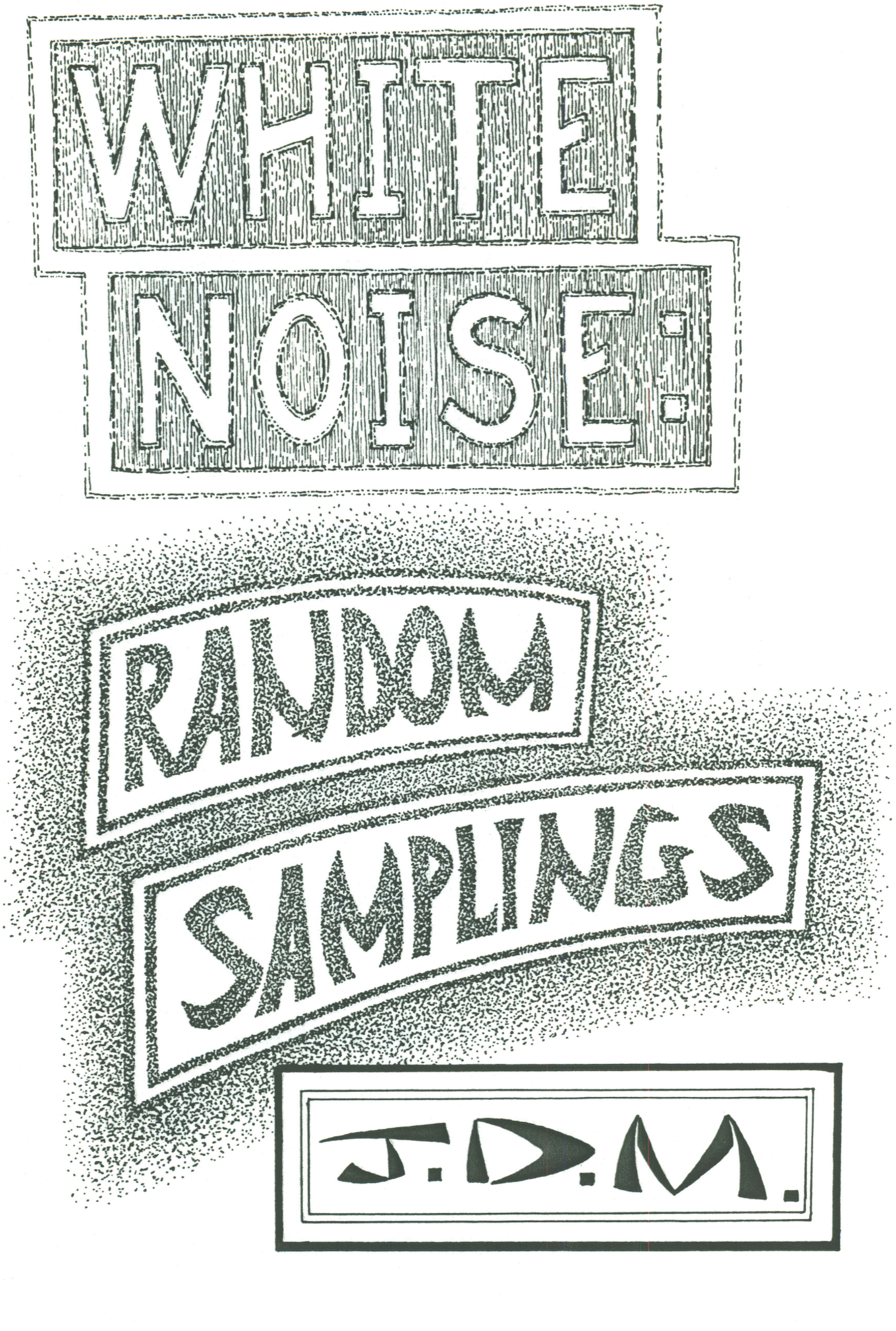
I'm not talking about when you're in a life or death struggle with some creepy asshole who's madly trying to cleave your skull. When you find yourself in these situations, forget about the niceties and just puncture the guy's spleen. There are, however, times when there are rules to the combat. As mentioned earlier, you may find yourself in an official duel. Duels are fought, usually with someone for each participant as a second. If either of the combatants gets help from an outside source, there will be real trouble. Also, these things are usually only until the first wounding. Very rarely are they fought to the death.
There are other polite fights. Bar fights usually have some very basic ground rules. Don't draw weapons unless you want it to turn real serious real fast.

Here are some random bits of advice that may keep you from committing a social blunder , and maybe keep you from getting into big trouble. Never ask a whore from Wol for oral sex, because they take the concept of "giving head" seriously. When in the presence of a goblin, don't ever refer to a goblin party a "Guran-Gang bang". Never tell a Thridd that his is the most honorable, magnificent race there is. I still can't figure out why they find that offensive, but they do. This doesn't really have anything to do with etiquette, but my mother gave me some advice early on which has served me well through my life. She said, "Hey you," this was her pet name for me, "don't ever french kiss a gith." I've always tried to follow this advice. A closed mouth kiss isn't too bad, however.

Some people come up to me and ask, "Hey, Sersus, how should I act in social situations so that I don't come across as uncouth or socially unacceptable?" Well, I'll tell you. If there's one thing I know about, it's the subject of social unacceptability. First, if you're at some party, you should always try to get as intoxicated as possible. It's damn anti-social to not get shitfaced at a party, especially if you're the one throwing it. Speaking of throwing things, if you feel the need to hurl chunks (throw up) at a social engagement, then you should always ask permission before hand. Some hosts don't appreciate that kind of thing, Law knows why. I always make it a point to come on to as many women as possible at these functions. I just figure that it's rude to only come on to only one or two girls. It makes the others feel left out. Lastly, you should always thank your host when leaving. A good host will thank his guests for leaving also. I get thanked a lot.

I guess that the final word on etiquette is that you should always do what will get you into the least amount of trouble. If you are going to do something that will get you in trouble, or make you look stupid, then you should try to have as much fun while doing it as possible.

NEXT: MAGIC AND OTHER SPIRITS



WHITE NOISE:

RANDOM SAMPLINGS

J.D.M.

PRIMAL VIEW

'Yello! Huzzah! Ō-Hayo! Howw-DEEE! Yep, "MOTIVE 3, ME 0". I am yet again writing this on deadline-eve. It promises to be a rather strange time tonight.

This is third in the string of last minute submittion for me. And yet again I didn't do what I had planned. What did I do? Well, no "**Weirdness**" comic stuff, no "**Justice Squad**", and only a very small part of the "**CTHULHU**" scenario. However, I did get the first part of "**PAPAL BULL**" done for this issue. Next time? probably more "**...BULL**", "**CTHULHU**" stuff and strange art. Oh! Who's the lady in the picture? Why that's "**LITTLE LUCY MUFFIN TAIL!**" (and she's wearing her **comfortable** shoes).

Et Tu Brute?

Machiavelli had the right idea! Let your enemies fight your enemies. Don't let your right hand know what your left hand is doing. If you can't beat 'em, bribe 'em. Confusion is your friend and ally, as long as **you're** the one causing it. And always, but always have a good excuse.

What does that mean when applied to games and gaming by a GM? I'm not sure, but I think that it implies a use of miss-direction and miss-information. That allows the players to decipher the **Gordian Knot** of plot and intrigue. Follow the trail that your players lead you. Don't be afraid of changing plot lines when your players dream up something interesting. Drag in some Red Herrings, Old Plot Lines, and Totally Irrelevant Nonsense to keep 'em guessing. And **DON'T LET THEM KNOW WHICH YOU'RE DOING**.

THE RISE OF CHTHON

Instead of presenting this in a rational fashion I have succumbed to temptation, and will now present without delay.

CTHULHU CREATURES FOR CHAMPIONS!

******* DON'T BE ALARMED! THESE THINGS DON'T *NORMALLY* EXIST! *******

These are the four major creatures it is possible to meet in the scenario to come. They were selected mostly for player awareness and reaction. All as interperated by me. There are a number of important conventions to be used when running these things against PC's. First, in an existing campaign matters **must** be balanced for the heros to win in the end or you had better switch to a "CALL OF CTHULHU" campaign. Second, this is not INTENDED to be a hack and slash dungeon crawl. It's supposed to extend the normal responses of both PC's and players to cover events extraordinarily far removed from convention realms of action. Third, it is PRIMARILY intended as a competition module to lead the players though a series of events allowing a fairly clear judgment to be made of their game playing and role playing skills.

When actually using these things in an established campaign, care must be maintained to keep the monsters from being either overly or underly effective. Believe it or not most of these things REALLY NEED a number of combat skill levels to keep them from being TOTALLY INEFFECTIVE. Remember, they are taken from a game system which has a DODGE skill that will TOTALLY NEGATE an attack.

*** MYTHOS MENTAL CONTROL ***

I haven't the faintest idea just how well this will work. It hasn't been play-tested at all. **Any and all serious comments and critisism's thankfully received.** This is yet another of my attempts to simulate SANITY LOSS in CHAMPIONS. It most likely is a total and utter pile of CTHONIAN fewmets, like the last couple of ideas I've tried.

Firstly. The basic idea is to use Mental Control (defined as causing a VIEWING character to partially or totally spaz out) to force a predetermined set of modifiers on their further actions. Secondly. It is biased in two different fashions. Characters with Psychological Limitations in their write up will get a bonus, or penalty. This modification is directly related to whether the individual Psych Lim indicates a "Strong" or "Weak" mind. Also, the 'professional' familiarity of a character with "Un-utterably Dark and Ancient Evils". This is exposure to, knowledge of, or a "Working Familiarity" with. In other words whether the character has meet with, studied, or actually uses, anything in any way similar.

Examples: (All provide a bonus to the character)
    Have met/interacted with demon's or spell users.
    Have travelled to other dimensions.
    Have studied the history of magic or the occult.
    Have powers defined as "MAGIC".
    Actually ARE a DEMON or some equivalent beasty.
Psych Limit Examples: (Vary in effect)
    Code vs Killing. (Bonus)
    Honorable character, honest etc... (Bonus)
    Likes to fight, bully, cruel. (Penalty)
    Casual killer (Penalty)

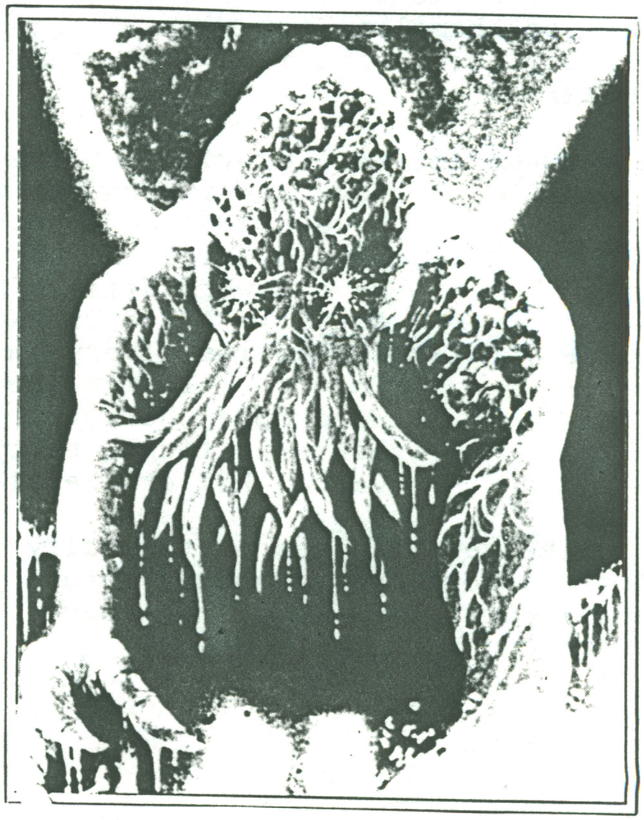
The general idea is to modify the reaction to SANITY LOSS in close accordance with the actual character as written. Further detail on this in next issue. Including some actual game mechanics.

CTHULHU CREATURES: MAJOR STAR-SPAWN OF CTHULHU

STAT	NAME	COST
75	STH	25
15	DEX	25
40	CON	60
33	BOD	30
25	INT	15
25	EGA	30
60	PRES	50
-40	COM	25
35	PD	--
35	ED	7
3	SPD	5
30	REC	14
80	END	--
83	STUN	--
STATS COST		286

DISADVANTAGES	TOTAL
VULN TO MAGIC 1.5 * STUN & BODY	30
VULN TO FIRE 2 * STUN & BODY	60
UNLUCK 3D6	15
DIST. LOOKS, FEAR ON 14>, NOT CONC.	15
DIST. LOOKS, SMELLS BAD, PREC. AT +8, -2/RANGE ZONE	15
CASUAL KILLER	20
HUMANS ARE VERMIN	20
OVER-CONFIDENT	20
HUNTED BY 99.99% OF HUMAN RACE, 14>	150
VERY BIG PHYS LIMIT	25
BERZERK IF TAKES BODY 14>, 8>	30
ENRAGED BY ATTEMPTS TO CONTROL IT 14>, 8>	15
SUSEPTABLE TO SUNLIGHT 3D6/PHASE	30
FREE POINTS	100
CREATURE BONUS	586
TOTAL DISADVANTAGES	1133

COST	POWERS
6	EXTRA LIMBS (6)
48	GROWTH 8 LVLS: ALL ON 1/4
60	DAMAGE REDUCTION 3/4, PD, RES
60	DAMAGE REDUCTION 3/4, ED, RES
40	RUNNING +15", 1/2 END. (2)
37	END RED ON 75 STH TO 0 END.
55	AREA OF EFFECT ONE HEX ON STH (FULL 75) TO 0 END.
90	H to H KILLING ATTACK, 3D6 (6D6 w STH), ONE HEX AREA OF EFFECT, AT 0 END
45	PLUS 2D6 KILLING ATTACK (+4D6 w STH) END.; MUST OF GRABBED TARGET.
26	LIFE SUPPORT: SELF CONT BREATHING, NO EAT EXCRET, NO AGE, IMM DESEASE, IMM TO VACUME
24	AID AS HEALING, 2D6, ALL ON
30	ARMOUR 20 PD
30	ARMOUR 20 ED
15	POWER DEF 15 PTS.
10	EGO DEF 10 PTS (15 PTS. TOT)
20	DAMAGE REDUCTION 1/2 ON EGO
225	COSMIC POWER POOL 75 PT.
NA	MYTHOS MENTAL CONTROL, 15D6
36	SWIMMING +18"
847+	TOTAL POWERS COST

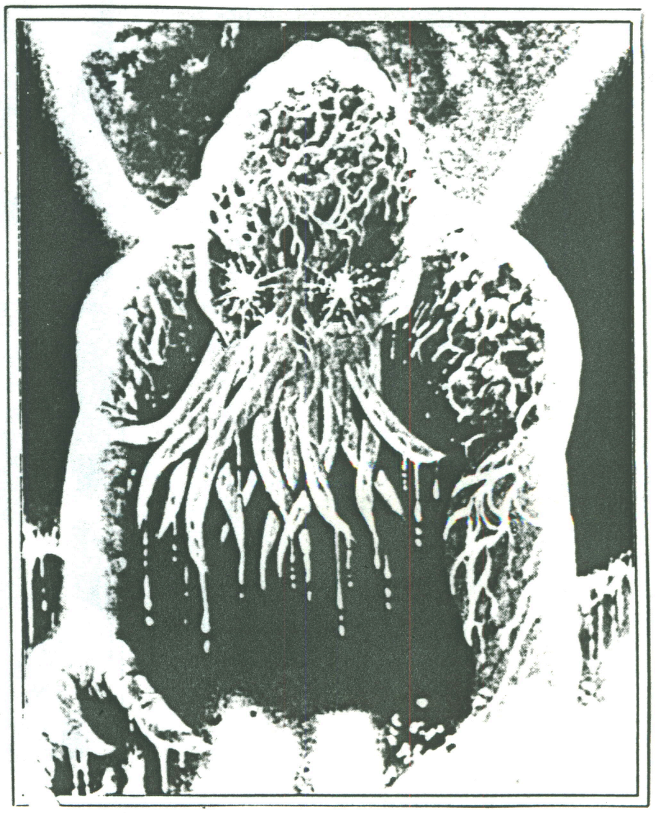


CTHULHU CREATURES: MINOR STAR-SPAWN OF CTHULHU

STAT	NAME	COST
50	STH	25
18	DEX	24
30	CON	40
23	BOD	20
20	INT	10
20	EGA	20
40	PRES	30
-30	COM	20
26	PD	--
26	ED	4
4	SPD	12
25	REC	18
60	END	--
60	STUN	--
STATS COST		223

DISADVANTAGES	TOTAL
VULN TO MAGIC 1.5 * STUN & BODY	30
VULN TO FIRE 2 * STUN & BODY	60
UNLUCK 3D6	15
DIST. LOOKS, FEAR ON 14>, NOT CONC.	15
DIST. LOOKS, SMELLS BAD, PREC. AT +4, -2/RANGE ZONE	15
CASUAL KILLER	20
HUMANS ARE VERMIN	20
OVER-CONFIDENT	20
HUNTED BY ALL ORGANIZED GROUPS, 14>	120
VERY BIG PHYS LIMIT	25
BERZERK IF TAKES BODY 14>, 8>	30
ENRAGED BY ATTEMPTS TO CONTROL IT 14>, 8>	15
SUSEPTABLE TO SUNLIGHT 3D6/PHASE	30
FREE POINTS	100
CREATURE BONUS	202
TOTAL DISADVANTAGES	717

COST	POWERS
4	EXTRA LIMBS (4)
18	GROWTH 3 LVLS; ALL ON 1/4
30	DAMAGE REDUCTION 1/2, PD, RES
30	DAMAGE REDUCTION 1/2, ED, RES
14	RUNNING +7"
25	END RED ON 50 STH TO 0 END.
36	SWIMMING +18"
10	POWER DEF. 10 PTS.
45	H to H KILLING ATTACK, 2D6 (4D6 w STH) AT 0 END
6	EGO DEF 6 PTS (10 PTS. TOT)
30	PLUS 1D6+1 KILLING ATTACK (2D6+1 WITH STH) AT 0 END MUST GRAB TARGET FIRST
26	LIFE SUPPORT: SELF CONT BREATHING, NO EAT EXCRET, NO AGE, IMM DESEASE, IMM TO VACUME
12	AID AS HEALING, 1D6, ALL ON
24	ARMOUR 16 PD
24	ARMOUR 16 ED
10	DAMAGE RED 1/4 ON EGO
150	COSMIC POWER POOL 50 PTS.
NA	MYTHOS MENTAL CONTROL, 10D6
494+	TOTAL POWERS COST

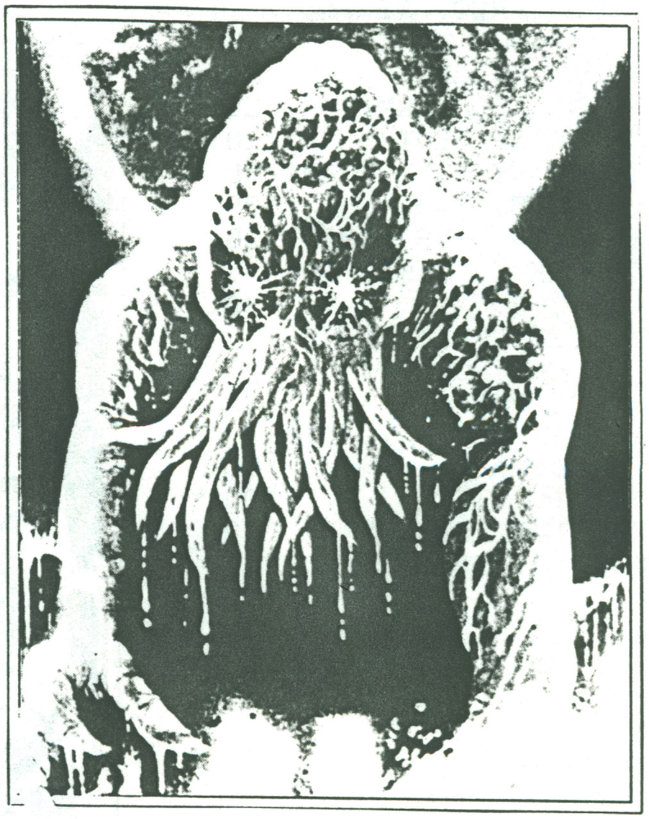


CTHULHU CREATURES: MINISCULE STAR-SPAWN OF CTHULHU

STAT	NAME	COST
40	STH	25
20	DEX	30
25	CON	30
12	BOD	1
15	INT	5
15	EGA	10
25	PRES	15
-20	COM	15
19	PD	1
26	ED	4
4	SPD	10
15	REC	10
50	END	--
50	STUN	5
STATS COST		161

DISADVANTAGES	TOTAL
VULN TO MAGIC 1.5 * STUN & BODY	30
VULN TO FIRE 2 * STUN & BODY	60
UNLUCK 3D6	15
DIST. LOOKS, FEAR ON 14>, NOT CONC.	15
DIST. LOOKS, SMELLS BAD, PREC. AT +4, -2/RANGE ZONE	15
CASUAL KILLER	20
HUMANS ARE VERMIN	20
OVER-CONFIDENT	20
HUNTED BY ALL GOOD GUYS HUMAN RACE, 14>	60
VERY BIG PHYS LIMIT	25
BERZERK IF TAKES BODY 14>, 8>	30
ENRAGED BY ATTEMPTS TO CONTROL IT 14>, 8>	15
SUSEPTABLE TO SUNLIGHT 3D6/PHASE	30
FREE POINTS	100
CREATURE BONUS	150
TOTAL DISADVANTAGES	505

COST	POWERS
2	EXTRA LIMBS (2)
7	GROWTH 1 LVLS; ALL ON 1/4
20	DAMAGE REDUCTION 1/2, PD
20	DAMAGE REDUCTION 1/2, ED
6	RUNNING +3"
20	END RED ON 40 STH TO 0 END.
36	SWIMMING +18"
5	POWER DEF. 5 PTS.
37	H to H KILLING ATTACK, 1+1/2 D6 (34D6 w STH) AT 0 END
5	EGO DEF 5 PTS (8 PTS. TOT)
15	PLUS 1D6 KILLING ATTACK (2D6 WITH STH) AT 0 END MUST GRAB TARGET FIRST
26	LIFE SUPPORT: SELF CONT BREATHING, NO EAT EXCRET, NO AGE, IMM DESEASE, IMM TO VACUME
12	AID AS HEALING, 1D6, ALL ON
15	ARMOUR 10 PD
15	ARMOUR 10 ED
90	COSMIC POWER POOL 30 PTS.
NA	MYTHOS MENTAL CONTROL, 7D6
344+	TOTAL POWERS COST



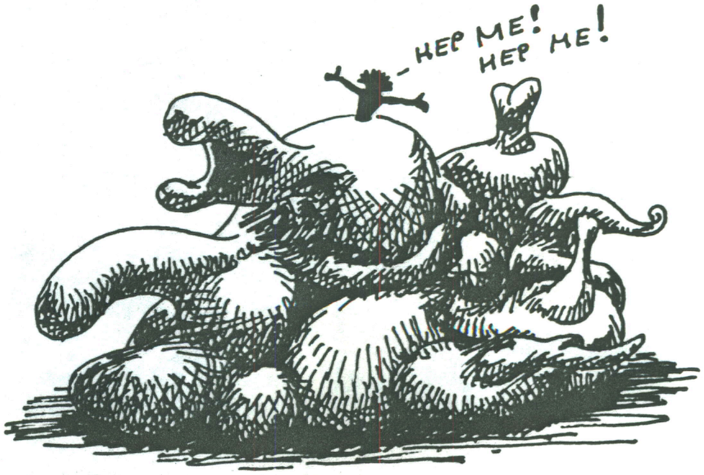
CTHULHU CREATURES: SHOGGOTH

STAT	NAME	COST
65	STH	5
18	DEX	24
35	CON	50
25	BOD	10
5	INT	-5
10	EGO	--
60	PRES	50
-30	COM	20
25	PD	--
25	ED	8
4	SPD	12
25	REC	6
70	END	--
75	STUN	--
STATS COST		180

DISADVANTAGES	TOTAL
EFFECTIVLY MINDLESS	15
BERZERK WHEN HIT 14>, 8>	40
BERZERK WHEN HUNGRY 14>, 8>	40
BERZERK ON GENERAL PRINCIPLES 11>, 8>	40
HUNTED BY ALL ORGANIZED GROUPS, 14>	120
BIG PHYS LIMIT	25
UNLUCK 4D6	20
MINDLESS HUNGER	20
OVERCONFIDENT	20
DIST LOOKS, HIDIOUS NOT CONCEAL, 14>	15
DIST SMELL, +4 TO SMELL -2/RANGE ZONE	15
SUSEPTABLE TO SUNLIGHT 3D6/PHASE,	30
BERZERK AT ATTEMPTS TO CONTROL, 14>, 8>	20
CREATURE BONUS	186
FREE POINTS	100
TOTAL DISADVANTAGES	706

COST	POWERS
60	GROWTH, 10 LVS, ALL ON
24	AID AS HEALING, 2D6 ALL ON
33	CLINGING, TO 65 STH
4	EXTRA LIMBS, +4 LIMBS
30	STRETCHING, 4", AT 0 END
30	DAMAGE SHIELD, 1D6, ED. 2*PENETRATING, ALL ON, ONLY VERSES ORGANIC STUFF
18	RUNNING +9"
15	ARMOUR, 10 PD
15	ARMOUR, 10 ED
60	DAMAGE REDUCTION, 3/4 PD, RES.
60	DAMAGE REDUCTION, 3/4 ED, RES.
20	DAMAGE REDUCTION, 1/2 EGO
78	AREA o EFFECT ON 65 STH, RADIUS SELECTIVE, AT 0 END
36	HAND TO HAND KILLING ATTACK, 2D6 (4D6 w STH), AT 0 END, MUST FOLLOW GRAB
33	ENDURANCE REDUCTION ON 65 STH TO 0 ENDURANCE
5	MENTAL DEFENSE 5 PTS. (7 TOTAL)
5	POWER DEFENSE 5 PTS.
NA	MYTHOS MENTAL CONTROL, 10D6
526+	TOTAL POWERS COST

706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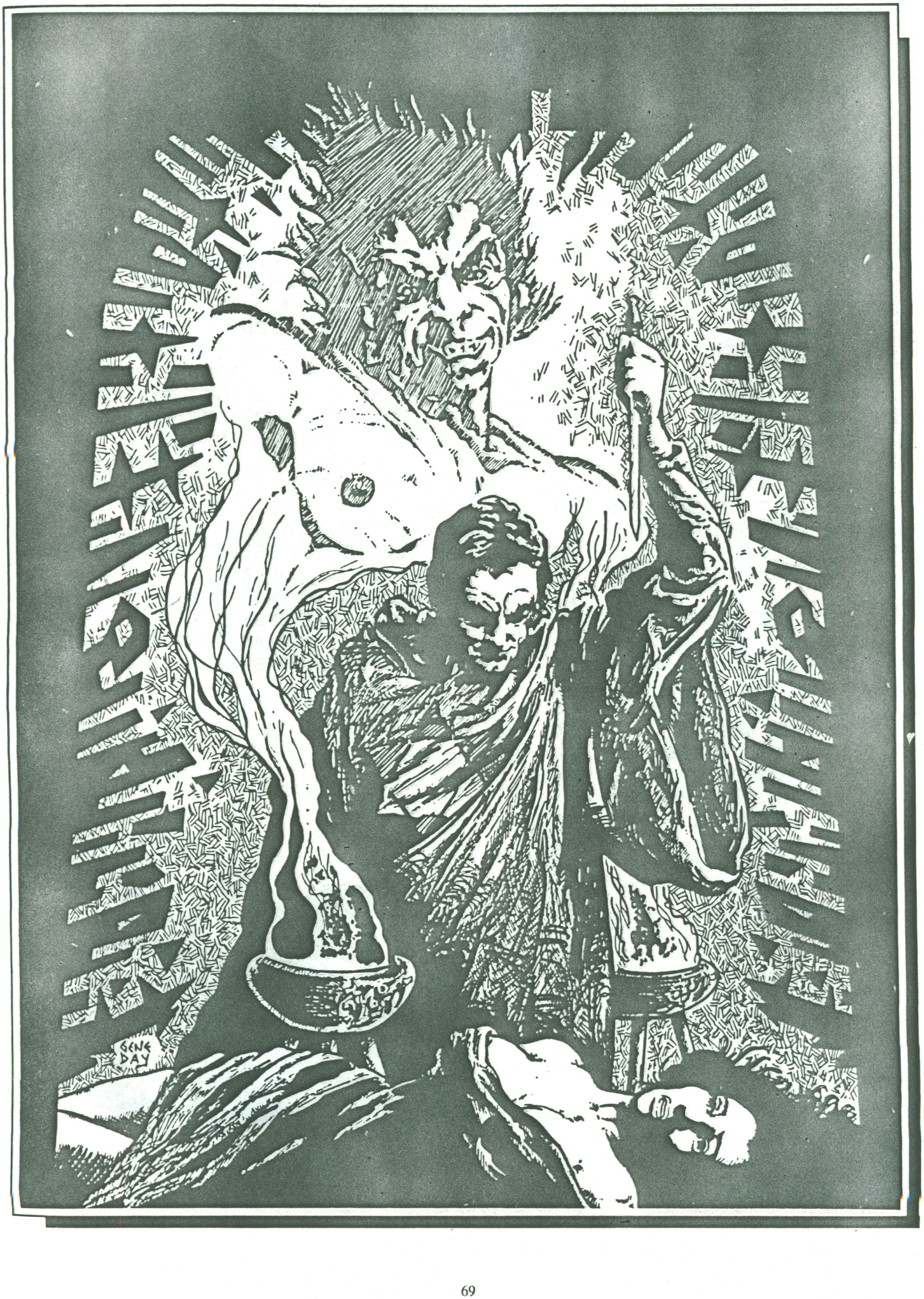
HEP ME!



GENE DAY

PAPAL BULL

A general, free form, conceptual list of thoughts on the formation and type of early religious practices.

FOR USE IN ROLE PLAYING GAMES ONLY.

Primitives: Through a stone age society (hunter/ gatherer family groups).

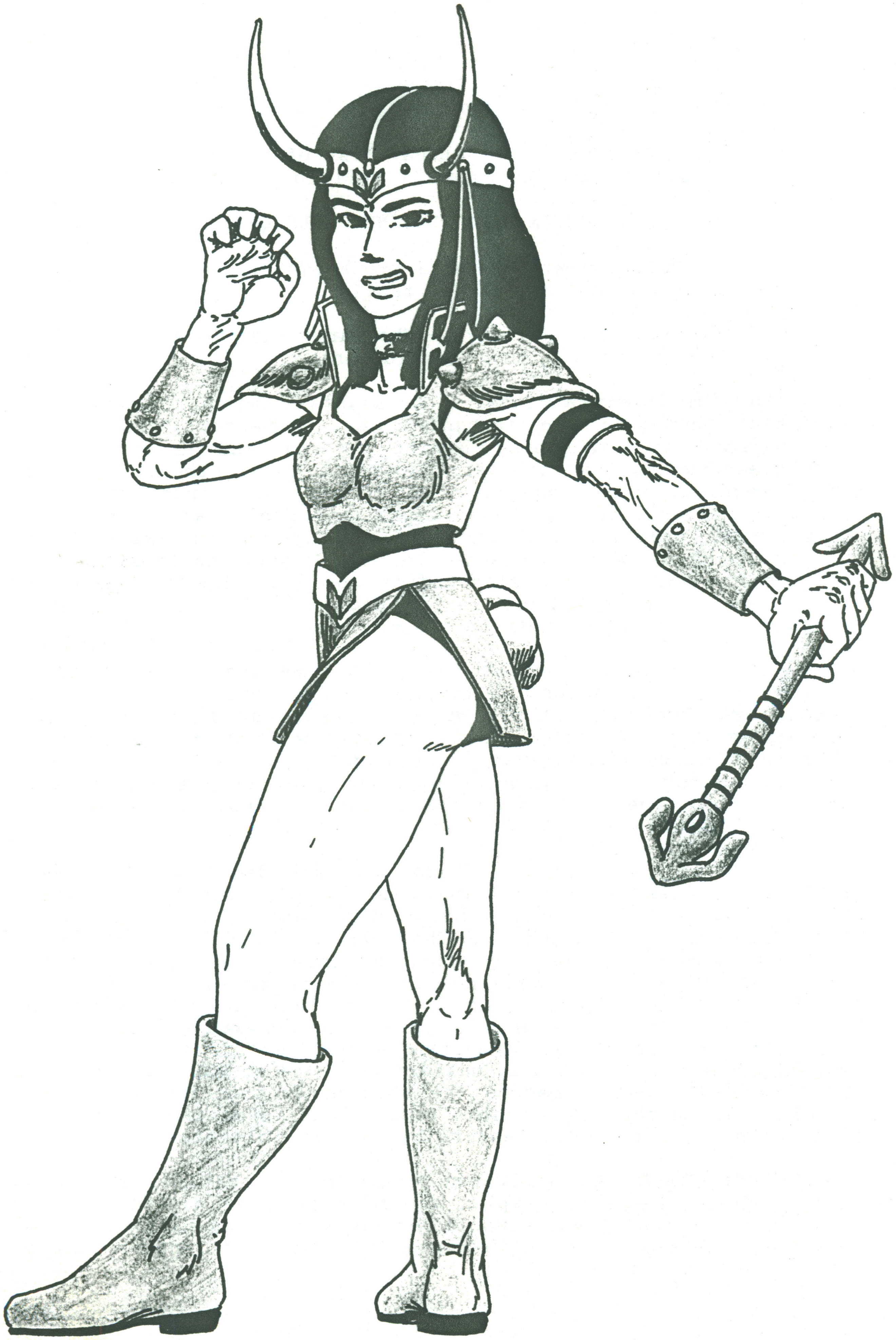
Start - Dim beginings - The early mind of man (Pure Speculation)

The dim understandings of a beastial mind. A number of important phemomina are recognised as, a reaccurances of, or reappearance by, something beyond control and understanding. Widespread events that are very important to continued life gain great segnifigance; frequent rain, floods, wildfires, droughts, famines, illness, food animals, light (the sun), dark, etc... Semi-formal practices and beliefs spring up to explain and propiciate these vast impersonal forces. In seeking to explain or influence events in the surrounding world a rise of symbolism should become a belief in magic. Magic which can be used to influence the world ~~of~~ spirits around them.

As the general understanding of the nature of re-accurring natural events increases, spirits and other forces causing these events are invented. Spirit worship and other forms of nature worship develope. Cults with sophisticated methods and practices of worship/supplication/influance develope and spread thoughout cultural groups. Another very important area of worship at this time would be the spirits of the animals hunted, or the spirits granting/denying luck in the hunt.

Later as new, advanced techniques are developed to handle daily jobs (like baskets for carrying, weapons for hunting, fire for cooking, ropes and string for binding, etc...) life takes on a pattern of specialised actions. Those who are better at a given job tend to do that job more frequently. This leads directly to a "**PRIESTLY**" occupation. Dealing with the spirits and powers of the world around takes a great deal of rote learning from those who 'know'. The greater the amount of esoteric knowledge that must be known, the more mystical, awe-inspireing, fearfull those with the knowlegde become. Eventually matters develope in which the masters of the "**OTHER WORLD**" become the sole practitioners of contact, worship, influence, etc... This stage leads to an increaseing awe and respect for the cult leaders by the non-initiated.

FIRST STAGE: An increased awareness of natural phenomina begets an increasingly complex and sophisticated explination for it. The first realms which would recieve attention are those which are most closely linked with the daily needs and requirements of life.



Tales of the Brass Monkey

issue 2 for issue Three of Motive

It's good to be back to these hallowed pages after my one issue hiatus. Among the offerings you will find in this episode of tales of the brass monkey are :

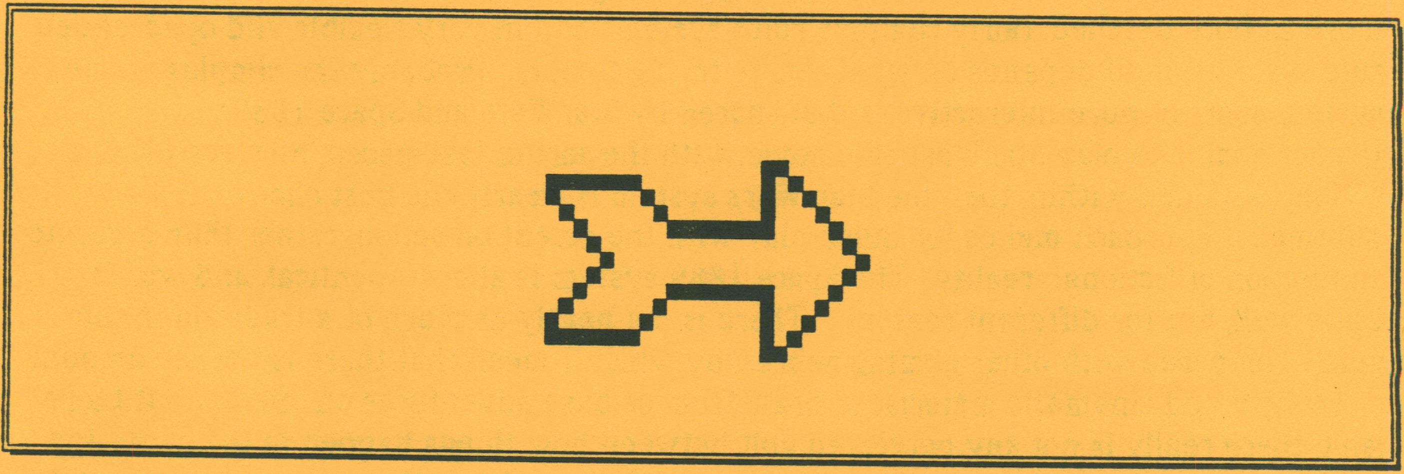
1) mailing comments
2) a readable copy of master magic's character sheet
3) a brief response to John Hanna's proposed topic
4) an apology
5) anything else that strikes me.
(not necessarily in this order)

First off, let me apologize to all readers for the 'Next issue' promises from issue one; even if I had made a submission, it would have included absolutely none of the mentioned topics, as I was lying. ... Well ok, maybe one of them; most of the points are in Mind Control, Overall Levels, and of course, my vehicle.

Now, on to this matter of rules systems. I've been gaming for going on ten years now and have played a fairly wide variety of game systems ranging from AD&D to Rolemaster to Star Wars and numerous others in between. Through all of this, I believe that there is merit in both detailed, fairly complex rules systems and in very flexible and open-ended rule systems; it all depends on what you're trying to play. Probably the simplest game system short of pure interactive is that shared by StarWars and Space 1889.

If your goal is to play StarWars the movie, with the sort of fast-paced, blasters-blazing action contained within, then the Star Wars system is clearly the best choice. It's minimalist approach makes for quick play with the accent on action, rather than accurate simulation of fictional reality. The Space 1889 system is almost identical, and works quite well, but for different reasons. There is not nearly as much of a tradition in this genre compared with other gaming genres; by which I mean that there is not the amount of literary and cinematic material to draw from or base adventures on. Being that there isn't, there really is not any perceived gulf between how things happen in the game and how you think they should happen. Also, let me tell you folks, if you've never played this game, it is a lot of work to role-play. First off, the proper accent is crucial, the game will not feel right if you don't use the correct accents. Next, you cannot use expletives or have sexual innuendos flying about. Finally take on a mindset of people in a well documented period of history that most of us are not intimately familiar with, while throwing in a setting with the richness of Jules Verne, Edgar Rice Burroughs, and Arthur Conan Doyle all blended together. The loose rule structure goes miles toward facilitating play, which incidentally ,is a blast.

At the other end of the spectrum, there are systems such as Hero System, and Rolemaster. Both of these systems have(had) several volumes of rules and literally tens of volumes of modules/sourcebooks, which, while not required, were often quite helpful in playing the games. Also, assuming that you are intimately familiar with the rules, character generation will take at least an hour. The question is does this make the games unplayable? Of course not (though admittedly, in Rolemaster, it is easy to get caught up in the movement/manoeuver table and weapon damage can be rather, well, creative). I have had many enjoyable experiences with both and for similar reasons; they simulate their genres well. Most heroic fantasy features fabulous fighters who wade through orcs, killing them with a single stroke; (often quite graphically); mighty magics cast by very versatile wizards, and other traditional conventions. This is just what is presented in Rolemaster, and though it is complex and takes a while to get comfortable with, it is an accurate and detailed simulation of the heroic fantasy genre. I believe that the penultimate genre game however, is **Champions.** Yes, it will take you a while to learn all the powers; yes, it will take you a long time to be able to run a good combat; yes combat takes a long time; yes, it's all worth it. When you play Champions, you play a comic book (JLA though as opposed to the Galactus vs Mephisto version of the Silver Surfer). In fact, the system itself is quite simple (3d6 for everything except damage) it's the power/effects, combat, and character creation that take some getting used to, but once you've mastered it, it is immensely rewarding to play. So much for rule systems.



This is Master Magic as of the last time I played him, I believe in Nov./Dec. of 1989. Written according to latest rules:

MASTER MAGIC

Value	Stat.	Cost
18	Str	8
21	Dex	36
18	Con	16
10	Body	0
18	Int	8
15	Ego	10
12	Com	1
4	PD (4)	0
4	ED (4)	0
4	SPD (3.1)	9
8	REC (8)	0
36	END (36)	0
28	STUN(28)	0
	Total -	93

Disads.

10 Accidental Change 8- in presence of Demons/Undead
15 Enraged 14- recover 8- when sees Demons/Undead
10 DNPC- normal- Aileen Lande, girlfriend, 8-
15 Secret ID
15 Hunted by VIPER 8-
15 Hunted by DEMON 8-I
20 Code vs Killing
20 Normal Characteristic Maxima
10 Monitored by CIRCLE 8-
20 3d6 susc. to power drains/transfers/destructions

150 +100 base + 17 exp. spent = 267

Cost	POWERS
30	EC: Magic
3	End Reserve 200 pip/ rec 40/hour
14	DEF 6 6D6 BODY Entangle- no range mod. -takes no damage from attacks- limited range (points in inches)- totally disrupted by silver- must be able to speak and gesture- x2 end. 12 END
18	8D6 EB - Explosion- must be able to speak and gesture. 6 END
2	STR 60 TK- target must be entangled- must be able to speak and gesture- at 1/2 end. 3 END
36	+20 PD +20 ED force field- at 0 end
12	Clairsentience- sight/hearing- other dimensions- x32768 range- at 1/2 end- concentrate at DCV 0 when using- 1 turn to activate- can be perceived at location with mental sense.
20	35 pt. Multipower (IAF- cape)
2	ultra 1) 17" flight 3 END
	ultra 2) 35" glide 0 END
10	Instant Change- any clothes
7	Mental Defense - 10 total
12	Linguist- Latin, Greek, Hebrew, Arabic; all at III
4	P.S. - Language professor 14-
3	K.S. - Magic/Occult 13-
5	K.S. - Magic/Occult literature 15-
3	K.S. - Atlanta 13-
174 - total	

Powers + Characteristics = 267 pts.

MAILING COMMENTS

Jon H.- Jon , you definitely win the prize for the funniest and most overall entertaining columns to date- keep up the good work.

Null + void - Neat characters, I even recognize a few; void, truly an impressive endeavour; I look forward to reading how it comes out.

Pat + Carl - Seems like a good character, but AD+D is hardly my game of choice.

John M. - Neat cartoons; also, a definite non-prize for a very creative presentation. Let's see Cthon Rising (and preferably let's playtest it).

Walter - You are about the only person I know who seems to have done much with Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay; I don't care for it, but you have given us a useful small village for most any FRPG.

Gil - You wierdo. Still, thanks for the obscure games; I like to read them, even if I don't play them.

Peter - Another of those pesky AD+D characters; oh well, still sounds like it was fun to play him. I guess I'll be seeing some 'Anonymous Freshmen' for myself shortly. I had rather suspected the root of your dislike of Champions; thank you for confirming it.

Jackie + Nicky - Very insightful. I just can't figure who you might mean in the 'wish fulfillment character' section--- oops!! what a giveaway.

Mike - Nice to see the immortal (infamous?) Amperion DoL finally see print. Could there have ever been any doubt as to who would most accurately predict when you would finish?

Kevin + Sonia + Sport - It's a real shit lot that you don't live close enough to run CoC game for us on a regular basis-- hope to see you soon.

D - Ya gotta love it!!!!! Thanks for helping me move.

Greg - Interesting reading; sorry to hear about your thumb- thats a 24 karat bitch.

Keith + Deena- Keith you were almost as lazy as me last issh; how long have you had this squid fixation? Deena I know the characters well and *love them slightly* less (thats a joke son, don't 'ya get it??). At any rate its good to see the most recent versions; also keep up the name-game.

Wayne - νο χομμεντσ ηερε- ιτσ φυστ σο μυχη εασιερ το τελλ ψου ιν περσον.

Remember:

BEETS CAN'T BE BEAT !

Secrets of Vulcan Poetry Revealed

Welcome to Issue 4 of Secrets, reproduced for the soon to be legendary Issue 3 of Motive. A quik apology is probably in order concerning last issue's garbled pagination, but my usual procrastination prevented any proofreading of the repro, so there you have it. Human error. (From Deena: I will be brutally honest; there was a serious snafu at Kinko's which might possibly have been our error, but was probably their's. Also, after having done five weeks of consulting work for the University of Georgia and only being paid for one of those weeks, our stress levels were quite high. Hence, the bad proofing. We, quite frankly, had some other things on our mind. You have all probably been in a similar situation and can sympathize. If you can't, stuff it). This time I am beginning my mailing a scant few days since I received Issue 2, so perhaps we can avoid any such problems this time around. This issue contains the promised character, Commander Comet (one issue late for the all character extravaganza, but what the hell,) and of course, typically vicious and brutal

Mailing Comments

WOE: Groovy cover art. Is your submission last so you won't receive as many mailing comments?

John: I was almost sorry to see the Fearsome Fivesome in print; being familiar with so many of the already published Champions Villains has drawbacks. I have always enjoyed your games at least partly because I was unfamiliar with the abilities of the bad guys and thus did not have to force myself to refrain from actions based on knowledge which my character could not reasonably have access to. Therefore, I did not read the Pentangle article. So sue me. The Other Stuff was interesting and amusing as always. Sersus rambling about fighting might tend to give others a somewhat slanted view of martial arts on Edge, but hey, it was still one of the funniest things in the 'zine. Re: yr ct to Mike- go ahead. Give in to peer pressure. Slam 'im, he loves it.

Chad and Stewart and Null and Void: The Psi stuff is, well, beyond wonderful. It is probably the best use of published campaign materiel I have ever seen. While I personally do not think I have the nerves of steel that it would take to play in such a campaign, I am sure that it is a great deal of fun for those lucky few who are involved in it. Re: Mailing Comments- I must admit that I am disappointed by your decision. In as much as one of the stated purposes of this effort is the exchange of information, ideas and opinions, I think that mailing comments are the obvious vehicle for dialogue and commentary. While I am able to talk to you and/or see you on a regular basis, not all of our members are, and they deserve the benifit of your comments as well. Additionally, I am not only interested in what you think about what I think, I am also interested in what you think about what everyone else thinks. If you have something to say which is so personal that you dare not print it, by all means, keep it that way. Otherwise, I would like to encourage you to reconsider.

Pat and Carl: More good stuff from the mind of Muskie. I was glad to see some fiction, Pat, I hope that others out there who have the ability/inclination to attempt it will follow your and Greg's examples (this means you, Mike) and grace us with some stories of their own. I would like to see the continuing tales of Aquilaeus & friends (Maude the Magic User? has to be Carl's character) as a regular or semi-regular feature. Carl: I have recently contacted the local Muse-by-the-Minute franchise, but the rates are just outrageous. I guess I will have to plod along sans inspiration until this thing makes me a millionaire.

Jon: More art! And a story, too. It seems that there is more to the mind of the other Jon than we guessed. While I was tempted by the Force Five article, I did not read it. (see my ct to John re: Pentangle) I am just happier playing in a game with these characters as adversaries (or allies) if I am not completely aware of their abilities, but I am sure other Champions GM's will find the materiel useful. You might want to try a less difficult format for presenting it than the "File # 18475987264987569181109765876510987546987-a" bit in the future, though. It tempts the reader to skip over an otherwise interesting piece simply because most of us do not have the patience to sort through the character strings and find the interesting bits. (A rather bad computer joke, sort of).

Walter: Welcome back. Glad to see you took the advice from Gilbert and others regarding repro, your mailing is much improved as a result. Slightly closer proofreading is still in order, however. The village is interesting, and shows promise. How about some details of the Witch-Hunter's government, and some intrigue involving a von Morin attempt to regain control of the town. By the by, what is the official line from Rothbourg on wandering Witch Hunters setting themselves up as feudal lords?

Gilbert: Yes, yes I would.

Peter: And lo, the scales fell from my eyes, and many things were made clear. Which is to say, reading your "character story" in the last issue has given me a framework for understanding your other views on gaming and world building. If these were the crucial experiences of your early gaming years, it is no wonder you chose the "scientific reality" approach to your game system/

setting. Just reading the accounts of the "Barony" were enough to make my skin crawl. (of course, I went through a similar phase in my own game-mastrering. It lasted for about the first 9 months I played AD&D before I realized that something was very wrong.) You were probably lucky to escape with a semblance of interest left for the hobby. This is not to say that I agree with your views on "reality" as applied to gaming, but I can sure understand where you are coming from a lot better. (It was also extremely funny.)

Jackie and Nicky: True confessions time. After a rare moment of complete self-honesty, I realized exactly how much of my own gaming habits were evident in your descriptions of "immature role-players" in Issue 1. I hope that I have left that behind me now, but since reading your article I have been more self concious of my actions when I game. As for last issue's offering, it was every bit what I had hoped it would be. Although I never had the chance to do much gaming with y'all whilst in Asheville, land of a thousand squid, I did recognize a certain unmistakable quality about the characters in your mailing, and would enjoy more of the same.

Mike: Alright, Mr. Arbitron, let's have those survey results. Do you expect us to wait forever to find out what our collective favorite BattleStar Galactica character is? As for Amperion- exactly how many times have you played this character, Mike? We got our heads together down here and we can't come up with more than two or three occasions on which you actually unleashed the awesome power of the dreaded Duke of Lightning.

Kevin and Sonia: Re: The Scenario-The archeological value of a sunk Spanish galleon off the coast of North America which could positively be dated to 1499 would be inestimable. Remember that in 1502 Columbus was still sailing to the Caribbean in the mistaken belief that he had found an island chain off the coast of India (!) If the PC's managed to merely recover the note book/diary from from the cultists it could most likely be sold to a museum or private interest for an extremely tidy sum indeed. Such funds could come in very handy when it came time to pay all of those bills from the Psych ward after the adventure was over.

Darrell: Well do I remember the creation of 8-ball, and all too well do I remember the look of sheer delight which crossed your face when the name was first proposed, so the "apology" won't wash. Thanks for the sneak preview of the Stronghold campaign stuff, I feel certain that the other members will enjoy it as much as I did. You took one of the best approaches to GMing a group of new players that I have ever seen.

Greg: Welcome aboard. Enjoying the yarn so far. Are you a gamer yourself or do your interests lie in different directions? (either way, keep writing.)

Wayne: As a long standing member of the campaign which has seen the birth, life and death (sort of) of the Thew, I was more than a little pleased to have a complete Thew-ography down in writing. Do you have plans for the Hero-Urge in the "dark future" campaign, or is it likely to wander off into the vasty deep for the next hundred years or so? Keep the Edgedex coming, despite what a great job Sersus is doing. I think he presents a rather lop-sided world view, even if it is extremely amusing.

FEMALE MYSTIC BONDING

Find herein:

1. Mailing Comments
2. Middle Eastern Names, with Pronunciation guides for a. Middle Eastern names, b. Japanese names, c. Germanic/Nordic names
3. Gender and Gaming, Part 1: Courtesy
4. After the great work of Null and Void, the first 2 installments of the Frontiere Agency Campaign (novice players) for Champions

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IN GENERAL:

1. Re: mailing comments. Guys, communication is the spice of life. I hate to admit it, but I usually read MC's first and *then* go back to read the other stuff. Mc's don't have to be long to be effective. Can't we all give it a try?

2. Re: TV shows for plot ideas. Everyone--if you haven't watched Twin Peaks yet, you simply must. Its great stuff that can spark one's imagination to great degree. Gil over at Game is Afoot has tapes. If anyone comes to visit Athens, maybe we could have a Twin Peaks party.

Cover--Jon, great work. I really think you should do some Edge art or some art for our Champions and Middle Earth campaigns.

Tail of the Monkey Man--I too merely skimmed Pentangle, because I like to be surprised. But you didn't put down that Harlequin kicked Widowmaker's butt! Oh, well. The Sersus stuff is priceless. How about as a topic, Races on Edge?

Death to All Fanatics--See above. I am truly disappointed you feel that way about mailing comments, because one reason I am shelling out so much money a year is to get feedback. You are both good writers--I value your opinions. Also, I do not see any danger at this point of this mag becoming all mailing comments. Please reconsider. Looking forward to the rest of the PSI stuff. C'est un Genre.

The Gaming Spouse--Congrats on the move. Yes, I hope more bios will be forthcoming. Please keep up the Aquilaeus stuff--by the way, how about more about the game itself?

White Noise--Great art. I, like Keith, merely skimmed the villains (heroes?). Do you have plans for them in the Ward Major campaign?

The Chem Geek--Welcome back. And thanks for a nicely laid out village to use in one of my MERP games. . . I hate guessing at what most of ICE's buildings are (since they seldom identify them on maps).

The Game is a Foot--Your pronunciation guides are herein. The purpose of the Athens Gaming Guide was to let more people in on in-jokes; no offense was intended, I assure you. Hope you enjoy the Frontiere game write up. Please provide an APA guide to abbreviations.

The Blue View--Hey, Peter, could you do something like an Edgedex with regards to your world? Re: mailing comment 07n. Maybe the point wasn't clear, since so many of us were stunned, to say the least. Could you maybe name folks' 'zines in the future on Mailing comments? Thanx.

Druid's Cauldron/Witch's Brew---Yes, characters are the most important, but I do believe setting runs a close second. Also, as I am sure you agree, characters need varieties of situations in which to act--fights, as well as running around towns, trips, funerals, dates, high intrigue, etc. And yes, you are right on the money regarding interesting NPC's. All of these things help define who the characters are. I'd like your comments on the installments of Gender and Gaming, since your views seem similar to mine (could you do it here in Motive, since I only see you once a year at best?). I admit I usually play female characters, but not always, and I find a change is oft refreshing.

Amperion's Thoughts--Aw, gee, Mike, I was looking forward to the survey. No Mac yet? Couldn't be much longer at the rate you are working. Is Amperion supposed to be funny?

Fishy Bits--Hi guys! You make me want to play Cthulu, which I never have before. More plot ideas--send 'em my way. How do you like Charlotte--met anyone?

New Squids on the Block (my personal favorite)--Darrel, sorry I conked out in Asheville. I finally got some wire frame glasses!! So when are you graduating and coming to grad school in Athens, like everyone else? Perhaps, you could be in on a Frontiere Agency investigation or two if you could come down for a visit.

The Snake of Forever--Like the title and the story--you sure cut off in a cliff-hanging spot. Is the title a mythical reference--elaborate? Sort of reminicent of the Midgard Serpent. Looking forward to more.

Imperial Elvis Post--I don't get the stuff about Don Knotts--are you joking about my father again? I am counting heavily on some Egyra action; I felt pretty cut-off after that last adventure with the old group several months ago. In short, it was abrupt. Could we blue book a conversation between Egyra and Gehang? An Edge map for Motive is a must. Thanx for TMT--I knew most of it already, but not some of the finer points.

****

Germanic/Nordic Pronunciation:

W like v
j like y
Hard consonants
Ch at the back of the throat, like loch
Vowel diphthong--second vowel is pronounced only (1st is silent).
The second vowel is usually a long vowel.

General English rules apply to most vowels.

Krumhild-----Crumb-hilld
Siegfried----Seeg-freed
Bjorn----Bee-yorn

Japanese pronunciation: (courtesy of Rie Ishii)

a like Ahh
o, usually long---ohh
i, like long eeeee
e, short, like eh
u, long---you
k is hard
y as in you

Accenting--keep all syllables even, as possible

Middle Eastern names and pronunciation:

Male--

Karim (careem)
Mohammed
Rashid
Cicalizade
Suleiman
Omar
Abdul
Abdullah
Husein
Ibn
Anwar
Hamid
Ishak
Mustafa
Jahangir
Mahmud
Kasim (caseem)
Selim (sayleem)
Akbar (ackbar)
Bajazet
Hadji
Ali
Korkut
Ahmed
Akhmed
Murad

Mehmet
Nureddin
Ibrahim
Hassan
Farad
Osman
Orkhan
Khalid
Ayub
Alladin
Yussef
Jamil
Ferhad
Javid
Bahiteddin

Female--

Mara
Nur
Cyra
Zuleika
Besma
Guzel
Maypehkar
Vartui
Turhan
Fekhire
Safiye
Mihrizshah
Humahsah
Lateefa
Hagar
Jehan
Tacli
Pakize
Rusah
Hadidgeh
Zinah

Incili
Banu
Firousi
Refet
Hale
Mihri
Nakshidil
Kiusem
Nilufer
Zada
Candra
Esmee
Farah
Harah
Fatima
Kabina
Khurrem
Cevri
Sineperver
Eminee

A as in ahh
I, like long ee
T is often like a d
U is usually long
E is sometimes like long a, sometimes like long e
ei diphthong like long a
Most other vowels diphthongs--both vowels pronounced
Accenting is varied
****

GENDER AND GAMING--Part 1 of several

Recently, I just finished a master's thesis on the topic of female identity and gender differentiation. I believe this gives me some authority to talk on the topic of our perceptions of sexuality in gaming. This issue I am going to deal with the problems of actually getting together to game, for example, at someone's home. Other topics I hope to address are: playing characters of a different sex, dealing with sexual activity in the game, etc. My views, of course, are just that--opinions. I am not trying to point fingers with these articles, either. I am merely trying to get some discussion going and get feedback on what I think is an interesting subject. Women are, alas, somewhat of a minority in gaming. Therefore, geting things out in the open will hopefully give everyone some better insights.

This issue, I want folks to think about the places they get together to play. Within this setting, be it a private home or on campus, what are your mundane (i.e. outside of the game) perceptions of the women that you play with? In the past, I have observed some things that are antiquated, if not downright disturbing. Again, this isn't name-calling. Nor I am saying that these things always occur, across the board, with men only. As players, male and female, all of us have probably been guilty at one time or another of discourtesy. The following questions will hopefully stimulate some thinking.

1. If you are playing in a home that is inhabited by at least one female, do you assume she will be taking care of food items? If so, to what extent--a) providing snacks, b) ordering delivery, c) providing a full-blown meal?

2. During the course of the game, do you assume the female(s) will take care of restocking food or running simple errands? Does this change with regards to whether or not you are in the home of the female?

3. After the game, do you assume the female(s) will gather up the trash? Again, does your answer change with regards to whether or not you are playing in the female's own home?

I hope you have understood the point I am trying to make. Courtesy has little to do with gender. As gamers, regardless of our sex, we should not make assumptions based on either gender or the physical location where the game takes place. Common courtesy cuts across lines of gender--I don't believe our behaviors need to be changed on account of whether your host or fellow gamers are male or female. What do you think?

****

As Keith and I mentioned earlier, the PSI Campaign of Null and Void is some good stuff. Recently, I just started a new Champion's campaign of my own. So stealing a leaf from the guys' book, I've decided to provide my own installment for your entertainment.

Background--Dominic Frontiere is the owner and operator of a small but highly successful detective/security agency located out of Waycross GA (yes, right on the Okeefenokee). With the unofficial breakup of Ward Major, and the wave of paranormal activity during 1990, he found it necessary to hire on some extra help--low level, low key heroes. He took resumes and made his selections--the PC's. Since they aren't a superhero group, their resources are pretty limited. They have to rely more on wits and chatter than on an unlimited money source and a SST.

Player Characters

Tesseract--Laura Shallott--a former policewoman with the ability to teleport herself and up to three other people. Laura has had some trouble adjusting to being a "heroine" and she still is somewhat unsure of how she should act. **Jessica French.**

Paul Thibedeaux--a Vietnam veteran, Paul is a typical ex-commando--with the ability to read the minds of most people. He isn't subtle, but his heart is in the right place. He seldom holds back when evil rears its heads. **Gil Head.**

Canary--Bonnie Bourne--a former sorority girl, Bonnie wears a bright yellow winged suit with which she can fly at tremendous speeds. Her squeals of dismay over her runny mascara are only a minor annoyance at present. **Heather Pritchett.**

Abraham Fist--a fat, dirty, tacky reporter for a tabloid, Abraham annoys everyone. He is sexist and likes only instant coffee. However, his baseball bat packs quite a wallop in a fight, and his knowledge of many heroes and villains is priceless. **Wayne Peacock.**

Non-Player Characters

Dominic Frontiere--An all around adventurer, Dominic usually only has business relations with the PC's. Essentially nothing about his past is known to the players.

Marion McCoy--Marion is the "child of the 60's" former butler/medic/computer whiz/housekeeper/gardener of Ward Major. Now he lives permanently at the Frontiere Office, keeps the regular and instant coffee going, offers a sympathetic ear to the players, keeps the Wildfire network updated, and grows some magnificent leafy green plants at the edge of the swamp.

Real Date: July 10, 1990
Game Date: The same

Dominic gathers his new staff (sans Abraham Fist) into the conference room. Introductions are made; everyone is a little suspicious of one another. Dominic sketches out the limited resources (monthly salary, the use of Wildfire and Marion, a $100/day expense account while on a case, the AX gold card only in an emergency). Then, he tells them about their first case.

A wealthy older woman named Mildred Perkins, who lives in a fine old ante-bellum mansion in Macon, seems to have a haunting on her hands. She wants the agents to come check it out and hopefully offer her some relief. Everyone agrees and packs up their bags (Canary packs 4). They pile into Laura's green Honda Civic (4-door) and set out on the 2 hour trip.

Laura, Bonnie, and Paul relax a bit as they drive and talk about their powers and what they should do at the mansion. Paul alone has had any dealings with "weird stuff" and even he is unsure. They suspect the haunting may be some kind of scam.

Arriving at the address, they are awestruck by the beauty of mansion and its gardens. Mrs. Perkins lets them in--she's about 60, small, only slightly plump, with greying blond hair. The mansion has three floors, plus an attic and basement, den, living room, library, dining room, kitchen, 5 baths, and 12 bedrooms. They discover that all of the hauntings have taken place on the ground floor. A ghostly image has been seen once, but otherwise, the incidents have beeen hot/cold spots, fallen item, noises, etc. They throroughly walk the house and grounds, and discover that the old carriage house has been converted into a garage. No trees are within a certain proximity of the house. Laura goes off to the library and courthouse. She discovers that the original house and carriage house were built in 1790, but that the house burned down only about a month later. It was immediately rebuilt. A man named Samuel Perkins died in the fire; his sister and brother rebuilt the house. Mildred Perkins was the widow of one of the descendents. She had an infant son who died in 1955.

Meanwhile, Bonnie and Paul are struck by the immaculate neatness of the house. Its too much like a showroom--nothing personal is anywhere. Even the library books are perfect. Paul finds out that the Perkins money is old money from shipping and originally, slavery. He makes plans to investigate the attic.

Laura returns, and Mrs. Perkin's maid Nelda cooks lasagna for everyone. At dinner, the china cabinet begins wildly shaking. Paul grabs it while Bonnie swoops out to investigate the nearby rose garden where she has noticed some shadows moving. She is immediately assaulted by some sort of psionic attack. While Bonnie is disoriented, everything goes back to normal. They all have a stiff drink. Bonnie (recovered) finds a small item, like a silly putty egg, in the garden that is filled with some sort of black ichre. Paul goes to the attic, the girls go to the basement. They find a small trunk that is locked. Not knowing that Paul found a key in the library desk drawer, they decide to retire. Paul stays up all night in the attic, looking at the estate records, finding bunches of old clothes and jewelry, and a very unusual curved dagger with a cuneiform inscription. He makes a rubbing and sends it, and the ichre, off to Marion for testing. He also puts in a request for some seismic equipment. Paul, returning to the attic, is especially puzzled by some pocket watches he found, one of which bears the initials of Mildred's dead son. He goes to bed at an unearthly hour and falls into a coma.

Real Date: July 17, 1990
Game Date: July 11, 1990

Laura rises bright and early to the sound of the door chime. A rumpled, fat man in mismatched plaid polyester, holding a pencil, stands there. He is eating a chili-corn dog. She refuses his offer of a taste. He identifies himself as Abraham Fist, reporter, "bringing the saupernatural to YOU!" Shocked, she lets him enter, where he immediately starts poking around. She rouses Bonnie and Paul (with difficulty). Mildred has gotten up to make pancakes for everyone. Fist doesn't seem to bother her too much.

After breakfast, more investigation is resumed. The players visit the local cemetary, and talking to the retired rector there, they discover Mildred is slightly loose, and has been since the death of her baby son in 1955. Her husband Basil died of a heart attack in '85, but there have been some tragic deaths in the family. Basil's older brother died in a WW II fiery plane crash. A generation earlier, the oldest son died when a horse barn at the estate burned down.

With a pattern in mind, Bonnie and Paul return to the house to check out the trunk; Laura goes back to the library, where a cute assistant helps her with some old newspapers. She discovers that Jehosophat Perkins, descendent of the burned Samuel and ancestor of Basil, was not too nice a fellow, especially with his slaves. She returns to the home in time to get a package from Marion via Emory Worldwide. Marion says the ichre is black magical in nature, similar to stuff used by the demonic Glass Hand. The writing on the dagger is unknown, but may be from an unknown literate African tribe. After using the seismic equipment, they deduce that the fire two hundred years ago somehow destroyed any trees and roots near the house. The trunk reveals some very personal effects--locks of hair, photos of Basil, and some baby books.

Returning upstairs, everyone is standing in the hallway when suddenly a ghostly figure appears, reading a book. The title on the spine has to do with necromancy, but no writing is on the inside. Abraham check out the situation with his magic detection, but can only find a trace on the figure. He gets a much stronger reading, however, from the up staircase. The figure does nothing except stand there holding the open book. Paul, deducing that a secret room exists under the staircase, grabs Laura and they teleport blind. Inside, there is indeed a secret room, with three mean looking agents.

A fight ensues--Laura and Paul pull out their revolvers, and Fist makes a great hole in the stairs to reveal the room. Bonnie jumps in and narrowly misses being caught in an web of ichre. Laura and Paul are pummelled badly and Bonnie gets a bloody nose; Fist saves the day by using his bat to knock out the agents. He is able to identify them as agents of Dark Seraph, a very nasty mystical villain. Paul does a mind-read on the agents to confirm this--and the fact they were here looking for a mysterious book. The agents die from some sort of built- in device. Paul and Fist make plans to dump the bodies in the swamp, to the horror of the law-abiding Laura.

Nelda, the maid, offers to get her old auntie to perform a seance to find out once and for all what is going on, because despite the disappearance of the agents, Fist still detects an aura of magic about the house. Meanwhile, underneath the secret room, another passage is discovered that leads to a hidden section of the basement. There, they find what was apparently some secret slave quarters--materials to teach reading are there, as well as the necromancy book. Paul remembers reading in the records about a slave brought straight from Africa during the life of Jehosophat; they assume she found this room, which must have been here as a sanctorium for the dabblings of old Samuel Perkins, and used it, not only to teach reading, but to dabble in the arts herself, perhaps to curse the cruel Jehosophat.

Nelda and her Auntie arrive at 7 pm. Auntie has on all the garb, as Paul remembers uncomfortably but respectfully from his days in Cajun Louisiana. She gives everyone a symbol (Laura gets a flounder) and they join hands to begin. Samuel Perkins, a malevolent burned man appears to them. He says that the slave Tituba cursed the line of Jehosophat, that every male first born would die by fire. To end the curse, they must save the eldest of the fair line now alive and destroy the dark line forever, before the next lunar eclipse in five years. Only Auntie's strength keeps him from further terrorizing the players, before he returns to the spirit plane. Everyone is exhausted and retires.

The next day, they pack up, leaving with Mildred both Nelda and an adept of magic recommended by Marion, to keep Samuel at bay. The players are troubled about the meaning behind the ghost's words, and the drive home is pretty much silent.

Abraham follows in his ancient Dodge. Paul sets up housekeeping with Marion in one of the large rooms at the office; Laura and Bonnie rent a comfortable three bedroom house with a large yard for Laura's pets. They decorate a room for Paul but he refuses to stay with them on account of principle. To their chagrine, Abraham sets up a silver, rundown trailer in their backyard. They wait for their next case.

Commander Comet

The man who became Commander Comet was born Fyodor Ilyich Vasalov on Dec. 7, 1942 in a small farming community in the Ukraine S.S.R. He was the second son of typical (so he believed) Soviet Citizens, Ilya and Karenya Vasalov. His brother Sergei, fourteen years his elder, had managed to convince the Soviet Army that he was old enough to enlist, and had since become a war hero, first at Stalingrad and later in Germany. After the war, however, it so happened that Fyodor's parents were deemed "politically incorrect," and Fyodor was seperated from them at the tender age of 5 years. His older brother, he was told, had died in the final days of the war. He never saw his parents again, and remembers them only dimly. As he was still young and impressionable, the governemnt saw fit to see to the "re-education" of Fyodor, and by the age of 18 he was able to re-enter the mainstream of Soviet Society, whereupon he promptly joined the Air Force.

Fyodor turned out to be an excellent pilot, and was soon established in what promised to be an excellent military career. Only the "unfortunate" details of his past prevented him from attaining the higher ranks. In 1983, Fyodor was sent to Afghanistan, where he flew numerous combat missions and also helped to train younger Soviet pilots. On one of these missions, Fyodor first learned of his superpowers. His helicopter was hit by an American Stinger missile; Fyodor bailed out only to discover that his parachute would not open properly. As he plunged earthward, he made an equaly unsettling discovery: Fyodor Vasalov could fly. Managing to land himself amidst a group of amazed but still hostile Mujahadeen, he also discovered that his body was apparently bullet proof and that he was possessed of incredible strength. After handily defeating the Afghanis, he reutrned to his base. During his trip back, Fyodor considered the many things he would be able to do with his newfound abilities. But he also considered the fates of some other Soviet paranormals, and was determined to conceal his powers until he could learn more about them.

He was sent back to the Soviet Union after his tour was over, and was stationed at an air defense base near Moscow. During this time Fyodor was able to call in some old favors and discovered a number of extremely interesting things. The parents which he so dimly remembered were not his biological parents at all, but were in fact foster parents to whom he was given at birth. His real parents were Gerta Andreyev and Ivan Nabokov, son of the world's first recorded paranormal person, Vassily Nabokov. Nabokov had been exposed to the Tunguska Blast Effect in 1907 and had later demonstrated an ability to fly. He died later during a government experiment, but apparently had at least one child first. That child was Ivan Nabokov, Fyodor's true father. Somehow his powers were linked to those of his grandfather, Vassily.

No one can examine secret government files for long without attracting unwanted attention, and when the GRU became aware of Fyodor's activities, they took steps to arrest him. Fortunately, Fyodor was warned by a close friend in the government just in time to flee his apartment. He reasoned that if the GRU had discovered his activities they would also be aware of the subject matter of his investigations and could deduce both the existence of his powers and his probable reaction to government attempts to duplicate the experiment which killed his grandfather. He decided to attempt an escape to the West. He knew that his own abilities would be of limited use against the Soviet Military, so he fled to his air base, overpowered a guard and stole a prototype MiG 39 being readied for test flights. The air force gave pursuit of course, but Fyodor's long years of practical experience gave him more than the edge he needed to evade the Soviet fighters. He flew to Germany, where he turned his stolen jet over to NATO forces and applied for political assylum in the United States.

Despite warnings from the Soviet government that granting Fyodor asylum would damage the "new openness and friendship" of U.S.-Soviet relations, Vasalov gained the asylum he sought. He changed his name to Fyodor Ivanovich Nabokov, ghost-wrote a semi-fictional account with Tom Clancy about his adventure entitled "The Pursuit of Red Avenger," and settled down to enjoy the "decadant" and "oppressive" culture of the West. He had managed to conceal his superpowers from the U.S. government, or so he thought. At about this time he met Marla Meyerson, a fan of Mr. Clancy who had read his book and become infatuated with the bravado of the book's central character. She was equally infatuated with Fyodor, and the two began a passionate affair which lasted for several months- Just long enough for Ms. Meyerson to learn what she needed to know about Fyodor Vassilov. Marla Meyerson was a NSC agent with receptive telepathy which required intimate contact with its target to function. The NSC shared its findings with the CIA, which concluded that the presence of a super-powered defector constituted a "serious threat to national security." Fyodor was summarily arrested and "detained" for "medical reasons" (experimentation.) Unfortunatly for the Government, Fyodor's book had been enough of a success that his disapearance did not go unnoticed for long. A lawyer umployed by SPAC, the SuperHero Political Action Committee, managed to have Fyodor released into the custody of Hamilton Pendergrast, aka The Mighty Thew. Pendergrast managed to convince Fyodor that the only way he could be sure of maintaining his freedom was to take up the life of a costumed crime fighter, as the superhero community "takes care of their own." Pendergrast stuck his neck out on Fyodor Vassilov's behalf, a favor which Vassilov has never forgotten. He adopted the name "Commander Comet" and created a costume which would reflect his national and military background, and yet be neutral enough so as not to offend those overly sensitive to such things.

Commander Comet has since begun a career as a "super hero." He enjoys this lifestyle, as it affords him opportunities which were previously available only in the military, but without the boredom and repetition of military service. As his practical experience with this sort of thing is rather limmited, he has taken to reading comic books, particularly Action Comics and Detective, to further understand how a superhero is "supposed" to act. His idea of costumed adventuring is therefore somewhat skewed. It was several weeks before he was conviced by the Thew that he did not need to find a phone booth to change his clothes in, and that a "Comet Mobile" was a bad idea. Still, Commander Comet has become a fairly well known hero, with a good reputation, and has contributed to the capture of several known super villians. If he is somewhat inexperienced, and occasionally reluctant, he makes up for it by his maturity and genuine desire to accomplish things with his abilities.

Powers and Skills

Through an ill-understood process, the Tunguska Blast released an alien tailored subatomic "virus" into the earth's ecosystem which has allowed the creation of many of earth's super heros and villains. Vassily Nabokov, who was directly exposed to the force of the blast, was the first person to exhibit these powers, in the form of unassisted flight. What speeds he might have attained we can only guess, as he died a fiery death attempting to reach his maximum velocity under the direction of the "scientists" of Project Hyper-c. Fyodor Ivanovich Nabokov is Vassily Nabokov's grandson, and we can only assume that his powers are similar in function to his grandfather's.

The U.S. government was able to determine in the time they examined Fyodor Nabokov that his body was largely made up of matter from what they dubbed a "tachyon universe." At some sub atomic level, part of the essential matter that makes up his body has been replaced by matter from an alternate dimension where the speed of light is not the limit on how fast an object can travel. Through as yet unknown procees, this enables Vassilov to fly. It also makes his physical body tougher and more resistant to damage than normal human flesh. Dr. McQuark, the famed paranormal scientist, has further speculated that the powers currently manifesting may be only the smallest portion of Vassilov's potential. McQuark also believes that the severe shock of Vassilov's plunge from his crippled helicopter is what caused the emergence of these powers, and that similar stressful situations might cause other powers to appear.

Comander Comet

STR:	50
DEX:	23
CON:	23
BODY:	15
INT:	13
EGO:	14
PRE:	15
COM:	10
PD:	15
ED:	15
SPD:	5
REC:	15
END:	56
STUN:	52

EC: Extra-Dimensional Form

30	EC Cost
30	25" Flight, x8 non-combat
30	Life Support- full, usable by others up to 4 people.
30	+20pd, +20ed armor

Commando Training

4	Strike, +0 OCV, +2 DCV, STR+2D6
3	Throw, +0 OCV, +1 DCV, STR+V/5
4	Disarm, -1 OCV, +1 DCV, Disarm,
4	Block, +2 OCV, +2 DCV, Block,,
3	Breakfall
3	Systems Operations
3	Combat Pilot
3	Paramedic
3	Security Systems
3	Navigation
1	Familiarity- Handguns
2	Familiarity- Aircraft
3	English- Fluent w/accent (Russian is native)

3	1 level w/ commando training
5	1 level w/ hth combat
6	2 levels w/flight
6	2 levels w/combat pilot, systems ops and navigation

Disads:

Hunted by Supreme Soviets, More powerful , NCI, -8	20
Hunted by Superpatriot, -11	15
x2 stun, x1.5 body from Gravitic, Magnetic or Disintegration attacks	30
3d6 Unluck	15
Rivalry w/Komrade Amerika	10
Public ID: Fyodor Ivanovich Nabokov	10
Psych Lim: Insecure about his own abilities	10

Totals: Char 157 + Skills 179 = 336
Base 125 + Disads 110 + Experience 101= 336

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NEWS OF THE WORLD

I just returned from a 28.9 day jaunt across North America. Riding in a yam-colored truck sporting a leafy-green camper top, with a canoe strapped to the top (just for the effect, of course, not actual use), and accompanied by my giant, black, bleach-spotted dog, I traveled through a buttload of states and a few provinces and had a most excellent adventure. Before I did that I finally finished my MA in English, six years in the making, including breaks. And I must say I feel most happy at this time even if I don't have a job...

Speaking of travel, one of the best parts of my trip was experiencing all seasons and weather conditions within one lunar cycle. We encountered hot, warm, cool, cold, steamy, foggy, wet, semi-arid, arid, arid extra dry, mist, drizzle, rain, thunderstorms, hailstorms, snow, dust storms, flying gravel... We also walked, climbed, swam, canoed, ran, and drove on/in/by/to/over/through creeks, streams, rivers, RIVERS, lakes, SALT LAKES, GREAT LAKES, okay lakes, mud, gravel, dust, trees, TREES, grass, tumbleweeds, sagebrush, grass, trees, hills, mountains, MOUNTAINS, gorges, cliffs, canyons, plains (only one of which was even close to flat), deserts, scrubland,... And we met or saw people, porcupine, concubine, skunk, raccoon, grasshopper, otter, antelope, deer of many kinds, buffalo, buttloads of butterfly, mountain lion, big horn sheep, dragonfly, sheep, goat, cow, eagle, hawk, owl, lots of little birds, frog, turtle, tortoise, fishy-fishy-fish of many sizes, mink, not a single snake, not a married snake, a spider so big I could see it crossing the road as I drove by at forty mph. I'll have to give you my tally of road kills once the figures are in: most of the above creatures, including the first, took turns being road kill for the study. All my personal road-kills were insects and one lady's 1987 Beretta(?).

In gaming, as we all know, characters like a change of scenery now and again, if just to go somewhere and count road-kills. In the boring campaign I run, the characters are stranded in a universe that the anal retentive GM centers in the historical Middle Ages (circa 1210) to satisfy his need for "realistic fantasy." Such a setting reduces the number of fantastic encounters or events, especially on a large scale, such as elf wars or ultra-powerful beings (like the popular fallen angels with stats.) trying to gain control of the universe. Likewise, the chances of the characters affecting the milieu on a large scale is limited. This obviously restricts some traditional fantasy plot lines which could be enjoyable gaming scenarios. Currently, two groups of characters are operating in my Middleearth: one group in Rome and another which has been journeying from the island of Gotland in the Baltic Sea to the ruins of Babylon.

The group in Rome has been brazenly exploring ever deeper into the labyrinth of catacombs beneath the city. This is the standard dungeon adventure we all know from our earliest gaming experiences (the particular dungeon complex has been in use for ten years; the current group is the first to reach the edges of what I have mapped and created eco-/social-systems for and thus is driving me crazy). The newest problem they are dealing with is trying to finance the changing of stone to flesh for one of their well loved traveling companions who got a good look at a medusan. Their plan is to recover and sell some of the incredibly life-like statues in that particular area. Of course, you can imagine the logistical problems with dragging life-sized stone statues from the depths of a dungeon.

The second group is being financed by a man who wants to add the library of ancient Babylon to his own collection. They are on a small version of the quest. The group has rowed into central Kievan Russia, barged down the Dneiper river to the Black Sea, sailed across the sea to Trebizond, and is now walking overland to where the Euphrates is navigable. However, we know that the course of the Euphrates has long since shifted and Babylon is nothing but a few rocks jutting from the expanding desert's dust. Will they achieve their quest? We'll know after the music clears.

So you see that a fantasy world can function in a historical setting. I will admit that I sometimes tire of a universe where the ratio of humans to the fantastic is closer to everyday experience. This is where religion, myth, and superstition (three words for shades of the same thing?) allow for expansion of our milieu's horizon. I combine world spiritual beliefs into a sort of monomyth to allow for all aspects of human belief. Then I divide this concept into four overlapping planes of existence. I gave you a brief description of these in **MOTIVE I**. I'd like to describe the plane most often visited by characters in my campaign: Faerie.

I call this plane Faerie for lack of a recognizable name which would better express the concept, at least to me who has to deal with it more than anyone else. Faerie is basically the Celtic Otherworld, the Ellysian Fields, The Seven Heavens, Eden, or any other earthly paradise. But it is so only in its natural splendor and the presence in large quantities of the creatures of myth and legend from all cultures. In Faerie, humans are a minority coexisting with all the other races which populate the imagination. Thus Faerie is as dangerous as it is beautiful; for most of it is wilderness and the chance of encountering "normal" beings is much less than in Middleearth.

However, the place is far more civilized in many respects. Where their is no real common tongue in Middleearth (a fact that is quite amusing when characters try to communicate in the heat of combat), a single tongue and its dialects dominate Faerie. For comparison, the language, Faeric, is slightly more widespread in its world than Modern English is in this one. There are other tongues, but the language of commerce and learning is that of the Sidhe, the most powerful of faeries. If you consider their roots, then Faeric is descended from what ever passes for language in the spirit plane. Technically, I developed Faeric from my study of Proto-Indo-European roots and its grammar and syntax. I still am not satisfied with the writing format, except that I do know Faeric is written right to left (Faeries are predominantly lefties).

Another aspect of faeric civilization is that the most powerful cultures in Faerie function within the ecosystem, not dominate it. Humans and trolls come closest to being dangerous to the environment, but their small numbers and the influence of the pervading culture reduce their impact. I should note that trolls are similar to Tolkienian orcs; mine, however, do not hate all nature and beauty, but are just the martially oriented society of an aggressive people. How much is physiological and how much is cultural remains unclear. Similarly, elves, dwarves, and trolls don't hate each other automatically. Hatred and affection are dictated by cultural or tribal clashes and individual personality. As a result, wars tend to be localized and sporadic, and most military action is of a raiding nature or, in the case of the Sidhe and their elven subjects, guarding the planar borders with Hell and Middleearth.

The planar borders are generally uncrossable and undetectable without the aid of powerful magics, some rare natural ability, or a sophisticated understanding of magnetic anomalies and polar wobble. It is modern knowledge of the latter that I used to develop a system of gates that rotate in a specific pattern tied to the earth's magnetic field. Part of the reason I did this (other than my obsession with an explainable universe) was that the topography of Faerie is mostly a mirror image of the Arctic Ocean floor to the edges of the N. American, Asian, and European continental shelves. Islands became lakes, Greenland became the great bay in Quadrant I, etcetera. One centimeter equals 150 miles. For climactic variability, I drifted the continent to another latitude. Line 8, running top to bottom, is the 45th parallel, halfway between the equator and a pole; north or south is purposely unclear. But, as you move from left to right, average temperature generally decreases. I have color maps (which won't reproduce well in blue) of seasonal winds, seasonal precipitation, yearly rainfall, ocean currents, vegetation, seasonal temperatures, political boundaries, and population distribution. The map here is of the rotation of magnetic anomalies and the associated planar gates.

The gate system between Middleearth and Faerie is based on actual rotation of the magnetic poles. The concept works this way. The Earth's magnetic pole wobbles approximately five miles per year. In 1986, it was at the X in Quadrant II. In 1210, it was at the X Quadrant III. I decided that circling the magnetic pole at a variable radius were twelve thin spots where Faerie and Middleearth were overlapping.

I chose twelve since this was the basis of Sumerian numerology: (12 month year, 24 hour day, 60 minute hour, 60 seconds, one dozen, a gross, 12 signs of the zodiac, etcetera. The Sumerians are still the accepted earliest civilization, and I want early. The point is to accent the association of earliest mankind with other sentient races in the milieu. Of course, you can recognize that the developing civilizations of humanity and faerie went separate routes.

These twelve invisible gates can be detected by the odd behavior of compasses in their vicinity, either spinning or giving inaccurate readings (such as large deposits of rock containing ferrous ores can cause). Of course, the compass is a rare item in 1210, being one of those inventions that frequently passed in and out of knowledge. Other than accidentally strolling through one, magical detection or magnetic sensitivity are the only other ways to locate them. The one factor I leave random is the distance the gates are from their axis and how widely spaced they are. Gates can even overlap or pass each other in their wandering.

Since the gates are tied to the Earth's magnetic field, I have endowed them with another trait. Ferrous metals passing through a gate are highly magnetized, to such an extent that they are transmuted to lodestone. They become soft and unable to hold an edge. Their magnetism then decreases rapidly, within a few hours, to the level of natural lodestone. This is not science, I know, but there is a reason for this natural law to be in place, and this is a prime example of what I mean by liking a rational Universe.

During the Stone and Bronze ages, faeries and other creatures passed frequently, accidentally or otherwise, through the gates. Many remained in Middleearth. They were few in number, which reduced their power over humanity. Not that there was an invasion or such, just that these powerful, near spiritual beings could act as gods and demi-gods to the humans if they so chose. One effect of passing a body through a gate, however, like the transmutation, is that ferrous metals become like a poison to that body. (Recall that small quantities of some "poisonous" substances are often part of a body's natural chemistry: i.e. iron in the blood of someone who passed through a gate. Elves and faeries have a copper based blood, anyway.) This manifests itself as weapon of iron or steel doing additional damage to a gate traveller's constitution. Thus, with the dawn of the Iron Age, the Otherworlders lost their edge. They could not wield iron nor withstand it (recognize fairylore and iron's reputed effects!). So while the number of faeries entering Middleearth did not immediately change, the number surviving there dropped rapidly until they became so rare that their existence became a topic of folklore and superstition.

This deadly effect of passing through a gate is not permanent. On a character's plane of birth, he has no such metal allergies. Ferrous metals, however, are not restored. An elf born in Faerie is not any more allergic to iron than any human. But a human who enters Faerie finds ferrous metals deadly. In Faerie, iron is most rare, so for a human to enter the Otherworld is less deadly in that respect than a Faerie entering Middleearth. This entire concept has one more purpose. It makes it very difficult for a Faeric army to attack Middleearth, and vice versa. So while a traffic of individuals is relatively common, wholesale invasion is nearly out of the question.

These rules apply to the similar system of gates joining Hell the Faerie. Since no gates join Hell and Middleearth, invasion or traffic is doubly unlikely. One thing can happen on cosmically rare occasions. Gates joining Hell and Faerie overlap with gates joining Faerie and Middleearth, creating a direct route across three planes. The object of the last great quest was to prevent a fallen angel (!) from artificially establishing such a gate. And no, they did not have to fight the fallen angel, though he did try to bribe them once.

There was no need to discuss the Spirit Plane here because it encompasses all other planes without the gates the semi-material planes require. No one invades through that plane either, because it seems a trackless nothing to creatures accustomed to the material planes, and all creatures who enter it stand a strong chance of losing interest in anything involving the material planes. I guess it's like being caught up in the Rapture.

OTHER

No mailing comments today. I loaned my last **MOTIVE** to a friend right after I read it. I do have a special hello and thanks to Null for the excellent letter. After the map, though, is The Anonymous Freshman.

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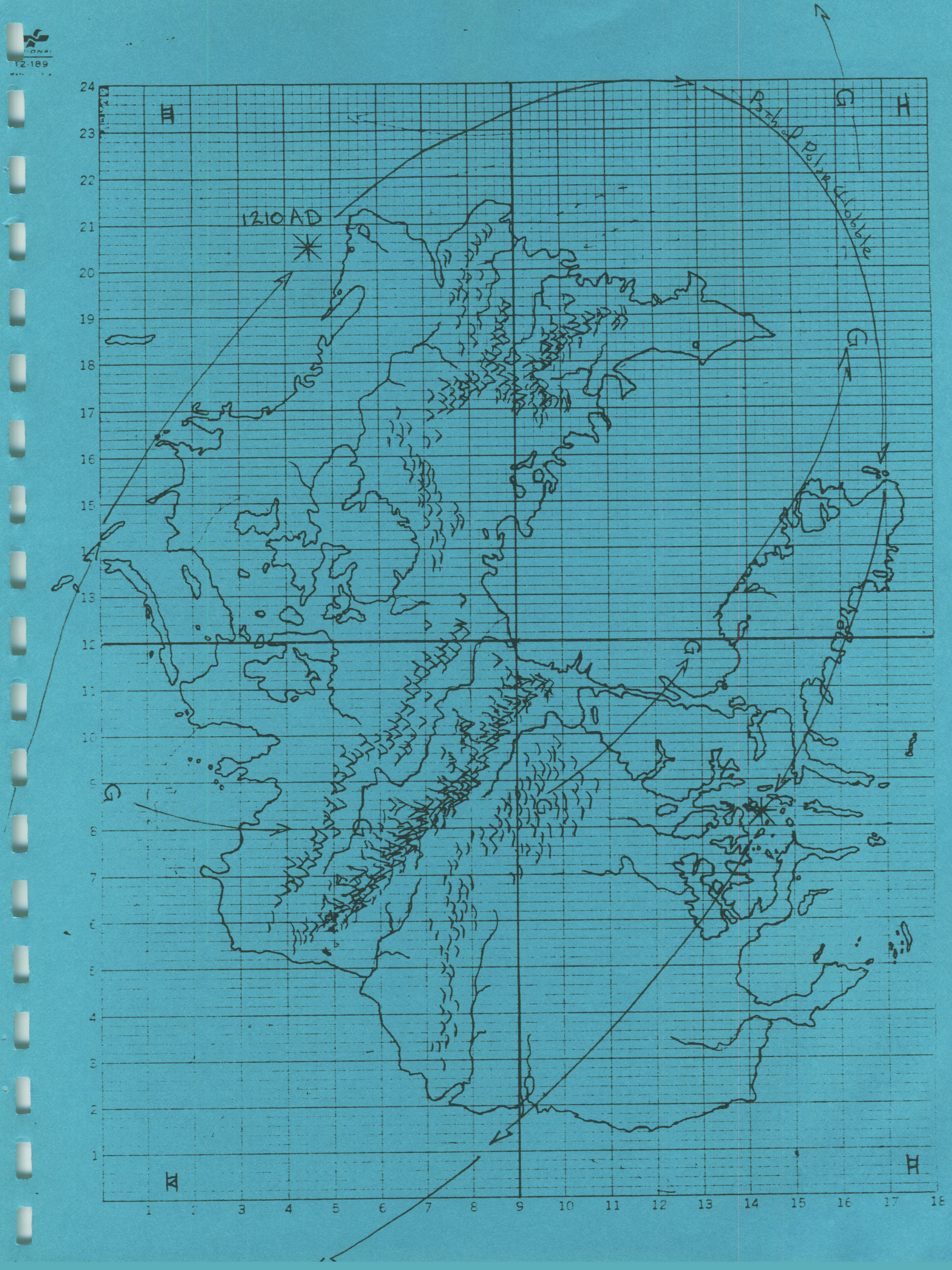
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THE ANONYMOUS FRESHMAN

"Teaching and pine straw work are only two examples for learning a second language."

"George Washington evolved from the problems of the small farmer."

"One of the disadvantages of trucks is that they have gas mileage."

"One of the disadvantages of hearing is that you lose it as you age."

"There are many different people in the public."

"I really admire these types of books because it sometimes answers questions I don't know about."

"I prefer violence because I like to be amused and witness brutality."

"With this kind of pure pressure the student with trolled emossion can be pushed too far and commit suicide."

"I think everyone should participate in organ donning."

"Our environment is suffering and we are killing wildlife. I have seen alligators eating aluminum cans. Unable to digest the cans, they die."

"Videos will never replace movies. With movie theatres you leave your home and conjugate with other people."

"College is a big experience for most people and marriage should not be part of it."

"Even I eat at fast food restaurants once and awhile. The availability of the many fast food restaurants adds sodium or salt intake to my diet the amount of fat in my diet has been affected and the amount of food I eat has also be affected."

"Drunk drivers are involved in many traffic innocendents."

"I live in a small urban town."

"Thinness is linked to mental capability and thoughts. Thinness improves a person's capable thinking."

"Being forgotten about by a society and death are two main reasons people fear growing old. Socialization of death is virtually nonexistant."

"Students should be maid to attend classes."

"The United States of America was started by small farms."

The Snake of Forever
Part II

Darkness and falling and a moment of weightlessness. Then the hand of gravity took hold of him once again. Surrounded by light he fell five feet to a floor that was as smooth and gray as polished slate. The impact was less than it should have been; his knees bent only slightly to absorb the shock. Reaction to the fall he had expected pushed him up, as if he weighed only a fraction of what he should.

The woman was bounding across the grey floor in smooth, gliding movements that covered fifteen feet at a stride. The room she was traversing was large, perhaps the size of a high school gym. It was dimly lit by a high, glowing ceiling. On the walls and on free standing consoles there were panels of lights and buttons. It was towards one of these that the woman was moving.

His gaze swept around more,as he tried to keep his sanity by observation. He had fallen from a silver hoop of metal suspended from a construct like a heavy, thick crane. In the room there were many more of these hoops, some no larger than the one he had fallen through and some the size of swimming pools. A look above the hoop confirmed his suspicion that he had not fallen, like alice, through a hole into some underground place. He was not beneath Pontotoc county. He was Elsewhere.

A humming sound he had not noticed suddenly ceased above him as the woman reached the panel and manipulated it. She looked up at him.

"Okay. We have a little while now. They'll have to re-activate this gate remotely. It should take the better part of an hour for the radio signal to get here."

"To get Where?" He asked. He tried stepping forward, but clumsily bounced a bit. It was like stumbling upward.

"You'll see," she said. "We still need to hurry."

"Goddamn it, I'm doing nothing else until I know something about what's going on. I don't like this science fiction bullshit."

She moved from behind the panel. She was holding a pistol.

"Later."

Confronted with the muzzle of the weapon, Duncan forced his outrage and confusion down. He took four deep breaths and then addressed the woman again.

"Which way then?"

"To your right. You can see a corridor there."

"Okay. Lead the way."

"Sorry," she said. "I'll follow you."

They walked across the room until they reached the corridor. It, like the floor, was of some polished grey material. Their footsteps were barely audible as the lesser gravity made their steps light. Duncan was finally getting the hang of moving after a few moments. The corridor opened into another room, one which was lit by a pale yellowish glow. When he saw the source of the glow, his mouth dropped open.

There was a window, a big one. Through it he could see a rocky, desert landscape, with no signs of life. The sky was black, what he could see of it. What dominated the sky was not blackness, but an enormous globe of yellow, orange, red, and a hundred other more subtle colors. The colors seethed, like an oil film on a pool of water. There was no doubt in his mind what he was seeing. He had followed the Voyager probe and its pictures avidly.

Jupiter was hanging above his head.

Duncan Billie turned and leaped, gauging where the woman was with his peripheral vision. She brought the gun up, too slowly. Even in the uncertain gravity, Duncan's reflexes played him true. He crashed into her with great force. The gun went flying.

The edge of her palm struck him on the side of the neck, weakly. Her other hand was a claw, leaping towards his face. He caught it and lashed out with his own right, a blow meant for the point of her chin, but she turned aside and he grazed her brow. He felt her body twist and guessed in time that a knee was coming up into his groin. He released her and jumped back, falling as he overcompensated for the low gravity. But he landed by the gun. She was only two yards away when he got it trained on her, but she stopped, a look of cold fury on her angular face.

"Now," he told her. "I want that explanation."

"You are killing yourself. They will be coming very soon."

"I'll risk it. I know for a fact what They - whoever the hell They are - want me dead. What I don't know is why. Or what you want, or why your friends were willing to sacrifice themselves to save me, which, by the way, I never asked them to do. So you tell me, fast, and maybe I'll go with you. While you're at it , you can explain This."

He gestured at the enormous view of Jupiter filling the window.

She looked as if she would jump him, gun or not, but then she took several deep breaths and nodded, masking her anger with a deliberate effort.

"I don't know why they want to kill you. I know that they do, and will if they can. They are after you specifically, Duncan Billie. They knew that you would be there on that ridge. If me and my people had not come along, they would have done so."

"Sure. But what were you doing on Pontotoc ridge at that precise moment? Quite a coincidence."

"Of course not. We had intelligence that they would try to kill you. We came to stop them."

"Go on."

"I don't know why I saved you."

"Bullshit."

"Believe what you want. I was sent to do a job, and I did it."

"Who do you work for? What are you?"

"I work for no one, but there are some things I trust. I have been told by someone I trust that it was important to save your life and take you to a place of safety, which by the way we will not reach unless you stop this childish game and follow me. keep the gun if you want, but come on!"

"Where are we going?"

"I told you. A safe place."

Duncan considered for a moment. Then he motioned her with the gun.

"You go first. We'll talk as we go. I will shoot to cripple if you make any funny moves. I respect your fighting abilities too much to come to grips with you again."

"Very wise."

they began moving down the corridor once more. As they did so, Duncan found it difficult not to look at the huge planet which he could see at the corner of his vision.

"Are we really this close to Jupiter?" He asked her back. She did not turn as she answered.

"Yes. This is the moon that you call Io."

"Uh-huh.That well was some kind of transport device."

"Yes. You're taking this remarkably well for an Aqshoka."

"A what?"

"An... earth dweller"

"You aren't from earth?"

The corridor was curving now, and no disturbing views were in sight. He could concentrate fully on the woman. He found such concentration pleasant, even in the midst of total confusion and eminent danger. Though not beautiful by the standard of twentieth century American society, Duncan Billie found her exotic and attractive, in a frightening sort of way. She was extremely competent, he liked that-but more arrogant and aloof than anyone he had ever met. She seemed human, though, even if he could not place her accent or features.

"I was not born on earth. I have lived there."

"But you are human."

"I am somewhat better than human, but in a broad definition of the word, yes, I am human."

"Better than human?"

"Genetically superior, let us say"

He laughed. "Funny. You don't look Aryan to me."

"Nor am I. Or any other race you ever heard of."

"Try me."

"We call ourselves the Temeki."

"I concede.I never heard of you."

She nodded.

The corridor turned sharply, and once again, Jupiter filled his vision. This time he could see more of the giant planet, however. He could see something else as well; a faint ribbon of bluish light which began somewhere near the window he was facing curving up and away from him in a slow spiral and vanishing into the face of Jupiter.

"What's that?" he pointed.

"Isintip Tekota."

"In English, please."

"Umm. "The Snake of forever."

"Poetic. Where to now?"

They were standing in another room, almost as large as the first. There were more of the 'control panels' but whereas the others had been associated with the hoops, these did not seem to be directly linked to anything. The one notable new feature was what Duncan saw moving towards them now. It was bipedal and made of what appeared to be metal and plastic. A robot. Its color was a shiny blue green, like the carapace of some beetles. Its stride was normal, not like the hopping glide which Duncan was learning and which the woman did reflexively. It spoke in a flat, human sounding voice, and the language sounded like the woman's.

"Kenaki kwana ka." It seemed to be a question.

The woman started to answer, but Duncan raised the gun to point at her head.

"Wait. What did it say?"

She looked at him contemptuously.

"It wants to know what we want."

"What will you tell it?"

"That we intend to ride the Snake."

"That thing?" He gestured at the pale ribbon of light which ran like a pathway towards the giant planet above them.

"Yes. It is a way to where we want to go. Pemke wi, Netep."

"What? I..." And then he understood as the muscles in his legs , back and arms suddenly went rigid. Slowly, he toppled in the low gravity of Io. The green robot was there, catching him.

"Amake." she said, and started walking. She laughed as she picked up the fallen pistol.

Duncan's view shifted crazily as the robot carried him. His muscles had begun to spasm and cramp, and the pain was terrific. He jerked uncontrollably in the machine's grip, but it did not seem to bother his captor.

They went up, Duncan was fairly certain, and he was dimly aware of the continued presence of Jupiter in his field of vision. Then he was forced into a reclining couch and strapped there. He bit his lip until it bled, trying to suppress hoarse gasps of pain as his abused muscles tried to conform to the chairs shape.

"The stunner will wear off in time. It was stupid of you to do what you did."

He did not answer; he wasn't capable of it. Before him, though, he could see that he was inside of some kind of bus-sized vehicle, ellipsoid in shape. He was facing a window which showed the barren, yellow surface of Io, the bulk of Jupiter, and the sinuous shape of the 'Snake of Forever'. He could now see that the latter was actually composed of a coil of some thin, glowing wire in hoops a thousand feet or so in diameter. He could see this because the 'Snake' began only a few feet away as a vertical cylinder which climbed into the sky of Io like a beanstalk. High, High above, it turned and flowed outward, towards Jupiter, still visible as a glowing, hair fine strand.

The woman spoke. As she did so, the vehicle began traveling towards the vertical, corridor like assembly.

"That's the Snake," She said. "It is a superconductor of electricity with a polarized gravitic charge. It will carry us into the major influence of Jupiter's gravity. From there we will go to safety. I tell you this because when the stunner wears off, I want you to understand that there is nothing you can do to alter the path of the vessel. Hurting me will not accomplish anything. I am no longer in control of what happens."

Duncan gritted his teeth, willing himself to comprehend what she was saying and to respond.

"Where?" was all he could manage.

"I don't know if I should tell you yet. I will tell you that it is my home; no more than that."

They were moving upwards now, and at a fair rate of speed. He could not see the surface of Io after a moment, since he could not turn to the side . Jupiter, though in his field of vision, did not of course appear to be getting closer or farther away. He felt no acceleration whatsoever. Above him he could see the corridor formed by the glowing wire. They were inside of it. He wondered if the vessel they were in had its own motive power or if the coil was somehow responsible for their movement.

"Duncan Billie," the woman was saying."Born in Philadelphia, Mississippi, 1961. Attended Choctaw Central High School until tenth grade, transferred to Miller Academy when your mother moved to New Orleans in 1978. Degree in Anthropology from Mississippi State University, followed by a year of law school and then the Memphis police academy. Two years as Mississippi highway patrol.

"Mother, Corine Billie, Choctaw Indian. Father, unknown. You are athletic; track and Shotokan karate in college. You currently play softball with a team sponsored by Tupelo Sheet Metal inc. Am I making myself clear?"

Duncan managed a sound. It was meant to be a "Fuck you", but it came out more as "Bwmmwoo". Nevertheless, he had managed to turn his head enough to see her. She was smiling.

"No current girlfriends. One serious relationship from 1981 through 1985. She left you when she realized you were going to be a cop instead of a professor."

That wasn't exactly true, Duncan thought in Ann's defense, but let it go. He wasn't that interested in defending Ann, even to himself.

It somehow did not come as a surprise that the woman knew so much about him. He had been attacked by a small army with weapons of a make he did not recognize. Had jumped down a well in north central Mississippi and ended up on a moon of Jupiter. He was now hurtling towards the latter through a stellar crazy straw. Next to all of that, the fact that someone knew the pertinent details of his life was more than reasonable. And they didn't know that goddamn much. They didn't know who his father was anymore than he did. His mother would not speak of the man. Duncan had always assumed him top be an indian, since he himself looked like a full blood. More than that he could not even guess at. Once, at thirteen, he turned his mothers room inside and out looking for some evidence of the bastard's existence. He found none.

They were traveling faster, though he couldn't tell how he knew that. He turned his head to look out the window to his side. His arms and legs felt like hell, but he could move them a little, too. Below, he could see a yellow orb, splotched with mountains and flat places of lighter and darker yellow. He recognized it as Io, and receding with actually noticeable speed. The blue coils of the "Snake" trailed behind them like a tail. Jupiter was gobbling up the nighttime in his peripheral vision.

"I tell you all of this so that you will know I am serious. Your life is in danger, and only I can save you. I'm not sure why I should; your life is worth no more to me than that of a dog. Still, as I told you, there seems to be a good reason, if a trust my informant. So sit still." She settled back in her reclining chair.

Duncan was now considering attacking her again, but decided that she was telling the truth about his inability to affect whatever was going on. His chance would have to later, when they reached wherever they were going.

Jupiter was growing larger with insane speed. They must be traveling at some completely unreasonable velocity. Even though he could still feel no acceleration, there was a ghost of a force tugging at him from the right, from where Jupiter was. It increased steadily. Slowly, his chair swiveled to compensate.

Then, very suddenly, the entire planet became blue. It left his field of vision, turning so red it was almost black. It passed them and then reappeared, as if the giant planet was orbiting them, changing color and size rapidly as it did so. There was a moment of utter blackness that he knew somehow was more than the mere absence of light. Then, the giant planet was suddenly visible again, looking just as it had at first, mottled and banded.

There was something different about it though. Something he could not put a finger on right offhand.

"There," said the woman. "Not so bad."

"Not...so...good..." Duncan forced out from his still numb lips.

"What...the...hell..."

"Don't worry about talking yet. I'm not going to tell you anything. Except that we are going back to Io."

Back to Io? That made no sense at all to Duncan Billie. Had this all been some sort of funride?

A roller coaster in space.

There wasn't an answer coming. Instead, he concentrated on what was different about Jupiter. After a moment, he found it.

"Are we on the same side of Jupiter that we were? "

"Essentially."

"Then where is the Red Spot?"

She laughed, a cold musical noise. "You're pretty bright for an Aqshoka. You figure it out."

He thought about it. She could be lying, merely to frustrate him. The could have passed around the huge bulk of the planet to a point that the red spot was simply not visible. Otherwise...

The red spot was a storm. A very long lasting storm, but still a temporary atmospheric phenomena. He seemed to remember that it was supposed to be a few hundred years old.

Either he was on the other side of the planet, the planet was not Jupiter at all, or he had moved at least a few hundred years in time.

He sighed. "I wish you would tell me what this is all about. I'm asking nicely this time."

"Just wait a little longer."

Now Io was growing on the screen once again. That shot down the theory that the planet in question might not be Jupiter, even though Io looked vaguely different. Of course, his observation of it before had been greatly hampered. The return trip seemed to take longer, all together. By the time that the odd craft was coming to rest on the alien yellow surface he felt that he had recovered most of his ability to move. He flexed, feeling his muscles out. Many were still sore, as if they had undergone strenuous exercise.

The ship returned to the horizontal after they reached the surface and departed the glowing coils of wire. It settled onto a metal strip about ten feet wide. He could see what he had been unable to see while the under the influence of the robot's weapon. The installation he had been in previously was built into a mountain. Parts of it showed, here and there as dark grey metal. One of these metal sections gaped like the jaws of the leviathan, and the craft entered the mountain once again. After a moment, the doors hummed open.

"I'm going to unstrap you. Don't do anything foolish. I've informed the robots to apprehend you if you are alone or if I am harmed."

Duncan was determined not to ask this frustrating woman anymore questions that she would not answer. He had formed a theory, but it was so farfetched even considering the events of the past few hours that he refused to view it with other than extreme skepticism.

He resigned himself to merely watching and waiting for a time when he might understand enough about his situation to react to it. For the moment he merely followed the woman.

"If you won't tell me your name, at least give me something to call you." He said after a moment. They appeared to be retracing their steps, back towards the room with the hoops.

"Call me whatever you wish, as long as it is flattering," she replied. "I have little tolerance for insults. I enjoyed seeing you suffer from muscle spasms. I would enjoy it again."

"How nice. Well. I think I shall call you Kali."

She turned. "You are a flatterer. I am quite familiar with Vedic mythology. If you meant that to be a subtle insult, you have failed."

"No, believe me, I meant it sincerely."

They had reached the large room with the hoops. In an instant, Duncan noticed the discrepancies. In another, he had grabbed Kali by the waist and born her to the floor. There was a roar of gunfire and the whine of ricochets, the latter of which Duncan had never heard before except in movies. He also felt a numbness that was a weak echo of what he had felt when he had been stunned by the robot.

There was at least one man in the room, dressed in a solid black suit of some tight material. It was painted with stylized animals of some sort. The hoops were all in different positions then they had been in before.

Kali cursed in her own language. She did not thank him or rebuke him, but instead pulled out the pistol he had wrestled from her earlier. The man had been carrying a similar weapon. She squeezed off two shoots, terribly loud in the corridor. The two of them slid back the way they had come, out of their attackers line of sight. From inside the room, they heard laughter. Then a short speech in Kali's language.

"Shit," she said, in English for Duncan's benefit. "I should have known that someone would have anticipated me."

"Is he one of the people following us?"

"No, you imbecile. They haven't had nearly enough time to catch us, and there is no way that they could be here ahead of us. No, this bastard has probably been waiting for a couple of days. When they decided to send a party after you, they must have left him here as insurance against someone like me."

She was laying on her belly, sighting down the pistol barrel as she talked. Waiting for the man to venture into the corridor.

"Why didn't he attack us when we first came through, a while ago?"

"He wasn't there a while ago. A while ago was twelve thousand years from now."

Even though he had considered this a possibility, to hear the words was still a shock. And Twelve thousand years exceeded his wildest dreams.

"But..." he began.

"Look, asshole. Lets take care of Ntadzke before he kills us. You'll get explanations later."

Her last sentence was punctuated by another bullet ricochetting down the corridor.

"He has a stunner," she said, when the ringing in their ears had died down."It has a range of only about fifteen feet."

"Where are your robots?"

"I lied. How could I have programmed them from the future? Besides, Ntadzke could easily reprogram them. They all respond to any Temeki. They are also deep-programed not to attack any of us. Which is why he isn't using them against us."

She took a deep breath. "Okay, Duncan Billie. If we let him keep us out of that room for long, the people who were chasing you in 1990 will ride the Snake back to here. I think we have about an hour."

"If the Snake is a time machine, why didn't they come back a few hours less than us, arrive here before us?"

"It doesn't work that way. The Ntempe will not allow such paradoxical situations"

"The Ntempe?"

"Something like a computer. It controls the Snake."

He sighed. He was in way, way over his head.

"What's your plan for dealing with your friend in there, O Kali of the skulls?"

She shook her head, then shrugged. "There are two of us."

"There could be more of them, too."

"A chance we'll have to take."

"I have a better idea."

"Really?" She did not sound as if she expected much.

"Yes. Give me the gun. I will take you out there as if I've overcome you and pretend that I want to make a deal with him. That'll get us a little closer."

"A fine, fine idea. Except that I don't trust you. You likely would try to make a deal with him."

"No. He's trying to kill me. You have had plenty of opportunity to do that and have not."

"It wouldn't work any way. He'd just shoot us when we came out."

"But he'd let us get all the way out. And he might try to get us close enough to use the stunner. He wouldn't want to risk us getting back into the corridor for another chance at him."

"You have a point there. Ah, well. We would probably die the other way, too."

She stood, reluctantly handing him the gun.

"Give it a try," she told him.

RECENTLY UNEARTHED

Robert Barnes
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Hello and welcome to this, my first article for MOTIVE. I hope you get as big a kick out of reading this as I have gotten from the material in previous issues.

For those of you who don't already know me, I am a 22-year old gamer who, in fact, works in a gaming store. I am a member of the UNC-A Adventure Gaming Society (AGS). The AGS is (apparently) one of the most successful gaming clubs in the country. Feel free to write to me at the address above if you have any questions or comments.

My particular field of interest in games is modern or science fiction material. Favorites are **Twilight:2000**, **Top Secret**, **2300:A.D.**, and (in the superhero genre) **Marvel Super Heroes**. I am more often a gamemaster than a player, so my articles will probably be geared more toward running games than player's material.

UPCOMING MATERIAL:

1. Starting with this issue, I will try to submit a short scenario or campaign concept for each of the games I am versed in. Hopefully, these will be at least entertaining, if not useful. This issue's adventure is for Twilight:2000. Next issue will probably be a scenario for Top Secret.
2. Ideas on how to set up campaigns and short-term adventures.
3. Sample characters from various games I have run/played.
4. Dealing with "problem" players.

Let me know if you have any suggestions...

This time, I have included a short adventure entitled "Crazy Horse" for the Twilight:2000 game. A map of the Black Hills of South Dakota (which can be found in almost any good road atlas or obtained from the South Dakota Bureau of Tourism) will be helpful. This is NOT a detailed adventure with lots of room descriptions and such...merely the bare bones of one. Let me know what you think of it.

Skill List

Skill	*Associated Attribute*	*Definition*
Aircraft Mechanic	STR	Ability to repair and maintain aircraft.
Biology	EDU	Knowledge of plant and animal biology.
Chemistry	EDU	Knowledge of chemical interactions and compounds.
Civil Engineer	EDU	Ability to plan/supervise construction of buildings, roads, and bridges.
Combat Engineer	CON	Ability to perform tasks such as emplacing demolitions, building fortifications, and camouflaging emplacements.
Computer	EDU	Ability to operate and program a computer.
Disguise	CHR	Ability to alter appearance to avoid recognition.
Electronics	AGL	Ability to repair electronic devices.
Farming	INT	General knowledge of growing food crops and raising livestock.
Fishing	INT	Ability to catch fish, using hook and line or net.
Foraging	INT	Ability to find food in the wild, including knowledge of what plants are edible and where to find them, and the ability to set snares and traps.
Forgery	AGL	Ability to forge a signature or document and have it accepted as genuine.
Forward Observer	INT	Ability to communicate fire data for indirect fire weapons.
Geology	EDU	Knowledge of rock formations and minerals.
Gunsmith	AGL	Ability to construct and repair weapons.
Heavy Weapons	STR	Ability to use antitank missile launchers, flame weapons, rocket and grenade launchers, large-caliber guns, and howitzers.
Horsemanship	CON	Ability to ride a horse.
Hunting Bow	STR	Ability to use a long bow.
Instruction	CHR	Ability to teach skills.
Interrogation	CHR	Ability to persuade or force a prisoner to reveal information.
Language	CHR	Ability to speak and understand a given language. A specific language must be chosen.
Leadership	CHR	Ability to inspire followers.
Lockpick	AGL	Ability to pick a lock.
Machinist	AGL	Ability to use machine tools (such as lathes, punch presses, etc.) to fabricate other machinery.
Mechanic	STR	Ability to maintain and repair vehicles and machinery.
Medical	EDU	Ability to render first aid/medical care to injured or sick characters.
Melee Combat	STR	Ability to conduct hand-to-hand combat. *Cascade skill (Armed, Unarmed).*
Metallurgy	EDU	Knowledge of smelting ore into metal, forming alloys, and fundamental metalworking.
Meteorology	EDU	Understanding of weather and the forces governing it.
Mining Engineer	EDU	Ability to supervise the construction and operation of a mine.
Motorcycle	CON	Ability to ride a motorcycle.
Mountaineering	CON	Ability to climb steep slopes and sheer cliffs.
Navigation	INT	Ability to determine position and direction of travel using maps, compass, landmarks, the stars, etc.
Observation	INT	Ability to spot concealed enemies and avoid ambushes.
Parachute	CON	Ability to use a parachute.
Persuasion	CHR	Ability to phrase arguments in ways best calculated to gain acceptance.
Pilot	AGL	Ability to fly aircraft. *Cascade skill (Fixed Wing, Rotary Wing).*
Scrounging	INT	Ability to find man-made items such as spare parts, domestic food, ammunition, etc.
Scuba	CON	Ability to use an aqualung or rebreather. May not be purchased at a higher level than Swimming skill.
Small Arms	STR	Ability to use small arms (pistols, rifles, shotguns, etc.). *Cascade skill (Pistol, Rifle).*
Small Boat	AGL	Ability to operate small boats, including oar-driven, wind-driven, and small (under 20-meter) motor boats.
Snow Skiing	AGL	Ability to travel using snow skis.
Stealth	AGL	Ability to move silently and without being spotted.
Swimming	CON	Ability to swim.
Thrown Weapon	STR	Ability to hit a target with a thrown weapon, such as a knife, rock, or grenade.
Tracked Vehicle	AGL	Ability to drive a tracked vehicle.
Tracking	INT	Ability to follow vehicles, humans, or animals by the traces they leave behind them.
Warhead	AGL	Ability to arm, disarm, and repair both conventional and nuclear warheads.
Wheeled Vehicle	AGL	Ability to drive a wheeled vehicle.

"CRAZY HORSE"
An Adventure For Twilight:2000

by Robert Barnes

INTRODUCTION:

This adventure is set in the Black Hills region of South Dakota sometime after April of 2001. The Player Characters are considered to be working for one of the rival American governments (MilGov or CivGov). Though not required, the Horsemanship and Mountaineering skills should prove very useful to characters during this adventure.

BACKGROUND:

With the nuclear attacks on the United States in November and December of 1997, the Strategic Air Command implemented its long-established plan to redeploy bombers to various surviving bases and airfields to ensure America's ability to continue fighting (not that it made much difference in the final analysis). Bombers returning from their missions landed at hastily prepared airfields, refuelled, rearmed, and went back out again. In time, there was nothing significant left to bomb, and very few functional aircraft to bomb with.

On December 4th, 1997, a lone B-1B "Phoenix" bomber crashed while en route to Ellsworth Air Force Base near Rapid City, South Dakota. Ellsworth was operating with a skeleton crew and no functioning radar, so it was unable to track the plane's approach with any real accuracy. While on its final approach over the Black Hills, the plane apparently developed severe engine problems and, after radioing a mayday to Ellsworth, was lost. Ellsworth noted the plane's last known location, but search planes turned up nothing (In fact, they were looking in the wrong area).

Ellsworth was soon abandoned by the remaining personnel, who took with them the knowledge of the crash. The U.S. gradually became divided between several rival governments--the Military Government (MilGov), Civilian Government (CivGov), and New America. To make matters worse, the nation is in the grips of a serious drought by the spring of 2001.

Recently, in the border town of Salinas, Kansas, a marauder claiming to have been a USAF flight controller at Ellsworth during the war was arrested. He attempted to avoid hanging by bargaining information about a "crashed bomber up in the Black Hills--with nukes and everything!" His captors didn't buy his story (or didn't care), but it was noted by agents of MilGov and CivGov, who soon reported the incident.

Both governments were concerned over the possibility of intact nuclear weapons and eager to prevent them from falling into "the wrong hands" (i.e.: anybody else's). As soon as they could be assembled, scout teams were dispatched by both MilGov and CivGov to investigate the crash.

The Player Characters are the team from one government (whichever one works best for your campaign), while the rival team should be administered by the Referee as NPCs. The NPC team should be roughly as competent as the PC group, perhaps even a little more experienced (to provide a challenge). Here the Referee can have a great deal of fun designing NPCs to contrast or compare to their player's characters. This might be a good way to introduce one of a PC's contacts.

RUNNING THE ADVENTURE:

The Referee is encouraged to develop the characteristics and personalities of whichever team is opposing the players. The teams are not aware of each other at the start, but their efforts will undoubtedly result in their paths crossing at least once. These encounters should be timed for maximum dramatic effect and enjoyment; but the players should be allowed to set the tone of the rivalry. The two teams may, for instance, compete to find the plane in a violent (the Van Damme Method) or non-violent fashion, perhaps planting false leads to distract or discourage each other (kind of like summer camp). They might have a violent confrontation, resulting in a deadly game of cat and mouse in the rugged wilds of the Black Hills. They may also find themselves in an unlikely alliance with each other against the New American cell in the area, or fighting for survival against the Indians or marauders that roam the area. The more colorful and clever the opposing team is, the more challenging and enjoyable it will be for the players.

Another challenge facing the players will be the small New American cell in the Black Hills. Though poorly equipped by comparison with some New Americans, this group has managed to set themselvesup rather nicely in the area, indirectly manipulating events through a network of spies and unwitting puppets. Should the New Americans figure out what it is the players are looking for, they will become an active and dangerous element in the search. For their part, the players may feel obligated to do something about the New Americans, depending on how much they have suffered because of them in the past.

The course of events is basically up to the Referee. The personalities of the various NPCs and the decisions of the PCs should provide a good "chart" with which to resolve the adventure. Above all, keep it fun.

THE B-1B "PHOENIX":

The B-1, although cut from the Pentagon's budget long before the war, was still present in significant numbers in SAC's arsenal when the war began. Code named the "Phoenix", the B-1 was capable of carrying an impressive array of weapons for a variety of purposes. The primary reason for the B-1's budgetary demise was the development of Air Launched Cruise Missiles (ACLMs), which arguably made the B-1 obsolete. Strangely enough, the primary role for the B-1 during the war was to carry ACLMs, and this is what the crashed B-1 had aboard.

The location of the B-1 is left deliberately vague, to allow the Referee to exercise his or her imagination regarding the ultimate goal of the adventure. Several possibilities are discussed below, but the Referee is, as always, free to create other options.

The plane, wherever it is located, it wrecked. It will NEVER FLY AGAIN. Its bomb bay contains a cluster of eight ACLMs (though only two are still capable of detonation). Unless someone with the appropriate skills (Warhead Skill) is present, there is very little chance of deliberately setting off one of these devices.

In fact, unless the Referee feels it will somehow contribute to the game (!), these puppies won't go off at all. Their best use (in game terms, anyway) is to keep the players motivated. Should it become necessary to know, however, they have the following effects:

A single B86 200-kiloton nuclear device is aboard each ACLM. When detonated, this produces an effect like the Hiroshima A-bomb--only bigger. This has a somewhat startling effect on the human body out to a distance of several miles. If you need more detail, soak your head in gasoline and light a match.

Here are a few suggestions on the plane's location:

A: At the bottom of a lake or reservoir. This could result in the players having to think up clever ways to recover the warheads. Two possibilities involve the use of SCUBA gear or the demolition of a dam or levee to drain the water level. This last solution might endanger settlements downstream, confusing matters more. This is my personal favorite. The clue to the plane's location could be physical, such as debris along the shore, or pieced together from stories of dead fish (from the radiation or leaking fuel) and noticing how animals stay away from the area.

B: At the base of a cliff in dense woods, possibly even partially buried by rockslides. Recovering the warheads would be very dangerous as any digging could trigger more slides.

C: Along an open slope high upon one of the mountains in the area. This location would require climbing skills and ingenuity to reach.

Wherever the location, it should provide a challenge to the skills and creativity of the players. It should also be noted that several monuments can be found in the Black Hills, most notably Mount Rushmore and the Crazy Horse monument. These can provide exciting visual backdrops to the adventure.

THE LAND:

The Black Hills Region is very rugged, being mostly forested and mountainous. The average July temperature is 69 degrees. Roads in the area are often very steep with frequent tunnels. Some notable areas in or near the Black Hills are described below:

Mount Rushmore: This mammoth sculpture portrays the faces of four American presidents: Washington, Jefferson, Theodore Roosevelt, and Lincoln. A visitors center to the landmark stands nearby. Anyone exploring the site may notice that all the electrical wiring has been removed from the area. The view from the top of the mountain is commanding, and is a frequent campsite for both New Americans and Sioux scouts.

Wind Cave National Park: This is one of the oldest national parks in the U.S. (since 1903), and covers close to 30,000 acres of prairie and forest. Wind Cave itself is the seventh longest cave in the world, with over 50 miles of formations. The park area is a home to buffalo, deer, elk, and prairie dogs. About 500 Sioux make their home here presently, with about 60 of these being warriors. The upper levels of the cave are used to store food and supplies. They have a variety of small arms for hunting and defense, consisting mostly of hunting rifles and shotguns, with a smaller quantity of military and police weapons. They have close to a hundred horses and about half as many pack mules.

The Badlands: Millions of years of erosion have carved out an eerie landscape covering about 250,000 acres of western South Dakota. Spires, gorges, and buttes dominate this bizarre region, which is home to buffalo, deer, and pronghorns. Very few venture into this area anymore, as it is now heavily patrolled by Sioux warriors.

Jewel Cave: This is the world's fourth longest cave, with over 80 miles of explored passages. The cave gets its name from the abundance of calcite crystals here, but contains many other unusual formations. Originally, a large elevator carried passengers from the visitors center to the entrance into the cave, some 290 feet below the surface.

Custer State Park: This 73,000-acre park is home to one of the largest herds of bison in the world, along with deer, pronghorn antelope, mountain goats, bighorn sheep, elk, wild turkeys, and a large pack of burros (brought to the area in the 1920s). Four historic lodges can be found here, all currently in use by the New Americans as basecamps for their control over the area. New American patrols are common in the park. Any intruders caught here will be taken to the nearest basecamp for interrogation.

NPCs OF NOTE:

PETER YOUNG

Young is the leader of the Black Hills Cell of New America. He is only 30 years old, having gained his position when his predecessor was killed in a tragic jeep accident. Young is a staunch supporter of Carl Hughes and New American philosophies. He runs his cell in a very rigid, militaristic fashion, and has quietly gotten rid of everyone he percieved as a threat. He believes that New America will triumph in the coming war, and that he will naturally rise to the top of the New Order when Hughes is gone. His last orders were to "neutralize" the militant Sioux Indians and begin expanding his control into Wyoming. He has so far been unsuccessful in dealing with the Sioux, a failure that has him operating on a very short fuse. His current plan is to assassinate Sioux Chief Soaring Eagle and let the Sioux factions do his work for him. If he learns of the ACLMs, he will stop at nothing to get them.

Young is a Veteran NPC. His motivation results are: Spades King (Ruthless) and Clubs Six (Moderately Violent).

CHIEF DAVID SOARING EAGLE

Soaring Eagle managed to unite the various factions of the Sioux Tribe under one banner, but his control is tenuous. Too many of the younger warriors in the tribe are ambitious and seek to gain glory by regaining territory lost for over a century. Soaring Eagle knows that his people are still no match for the U.S. Army. He prefers to bide his time, letting his tribe gather strength while teaching the younger members the old customs, and let the white man's world finish itself. His isolationist policy doesn't appeal to the young chiefs, and the New Americans only add fuel to the thier arguements. Soaring Eagle is 63.

Soaring Eagle is an Experienced NPC. His Motivation Results are Hearts Jack (Wise) and Spades Three (Somewhat Ambitious).

Character Record Sheet

Player ______________
Character ______________
Nationality ______________
Gender ______________

Age ______________
Service Branch ______________
Weight ______________
Throw Range ______________

Initiative ______________
Rank ______________
Rads ______________
Load ______________

Attributes and Skills

Strength ______________
Aircraft Mechanic ______________
Hunting Bow ______________
Heavy Weapons ______________
Melee Combat (Armed) ______________
Melee Combat (Unarmed) ______________
Mechanic ______________
Small Arms (Pistol) ______________
Small Arms (Rifle) ______________
Thrown Weapon ______________
____

Education ______________
Biology ______________
Chemistry ______________
Computer ______________
Civil Engineer ______________
Geology ______________
Medical ______________
Meteorology ______________
Mining Engineer ______________
Metallurgy ______________
____
____

Constitution ______________
Combat Engineer ______________
Horsemanship ______________
Motorcycle ______________
Mountaineering ______________
Parachute ______________
Scuba ______________
Swimming ______________
____

Charisma ______________
Disguise ______________
Instruction ______________
Interrogation ______________
Language (______________) ______
Language (______________) ______
Language (______________) ______
Language (______________) ______
Language (______________) ______
Language (______________) ______
Language (______________) ______
Leadership ______________
Persuasion ______________
____

Agility ______________
Electronics ______________
Forgery ______________
Gunsmith ______________
Lockpick ______________
Machinist ______________
Pilot (Fixed Wing) ______________
Pilot (Rotary Wing) ______________
Small Boat ______________
Snow Skiing ______________
Stealth ______________
Tracked Vehicle ______________
Warhead ______________
Wheeled Vehicle ______________

Intelligence ______________
Forward Observer ______________
Foraging ______________
Farming ______________
Fishing ______________
Navigation ______________
Observation ______________
Scrounging ______________
Tracking ______________

Contacts

Hit Capacity

☐
(Head)

☐
(Chest)

☐ (R. arm) ☐ (L. arm)

☐
(Abdomen)

☐ (R. leg) ☐ (L. leg)

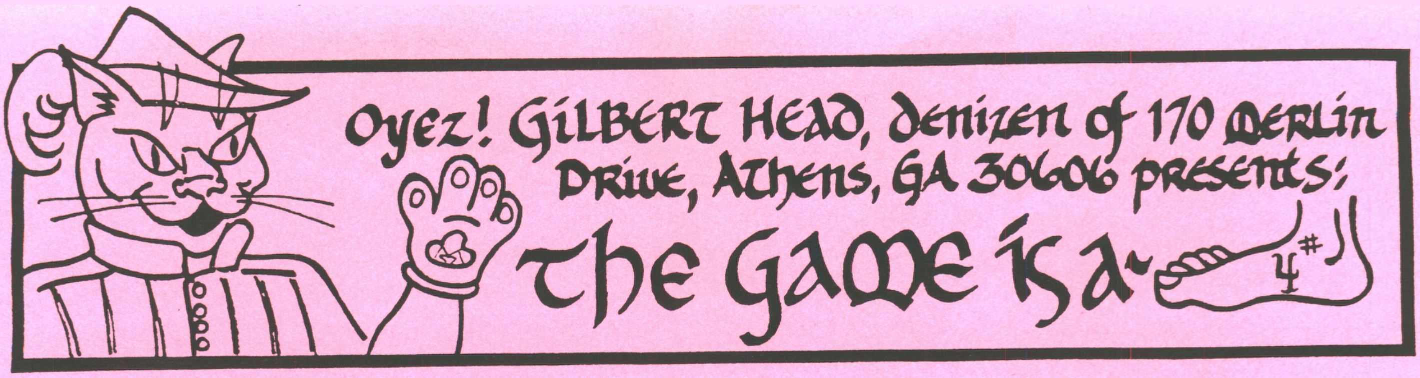
Base Hit Numbers

Skill	*Close (×2)*	*Medium (×1)*	*Long (×0.5)*	*Extreme (×0.25)*
Small Arms (Pistol)	☐	☐	☐	☐
Small Arms (Rifle)	☐	☐	☐	☐
Hunting Bow	☐	☐	☐	☐
Heavy Weapons	☐	☐	☐	☐

Unarmed combat damage
☐

TWILIGHT:
2000

Equipment


Oyez! Gilbert Head, denizen of 170 Merlin Drive, Athens, GA 30606 presents:
The Game is a-
4#

> "Oh have you seen Sir James the Rose, the young Earl of Loch Lagen,
> For he has killed a gallant squire, and we've been sent to take him."

Hi Gang. Can it have been two months already? Seems like only yesterday...

Thanks to Jonathan and those whose discursive minds led to the suggested topic for this issue of simple vs. complex gaming systems. Before we tread too deeply into this organic goop, it would be well for us to acknowledge that the definition of the terms "simple" and "complex" is going to be difficult. Where each of us would place a given gaming system along a continuum from tough to easy will be highly variable, and the basis for our comparisons are likely to be both relative and horribly subjective. Still, we should give it a try, because the philosophical question is an interesting one to consider.

I will probably take a broader view. There are probably many good reasons for doing it this way; my chief reason is my lack of familiarity with specific systems, and the desire to refrain from framing "I know what I like" arguments based on so little data.

So, let's assume that there are games that vary in complexity, according to the way that they are structured by their creators. These differences are almost always mechanical (at this level), and reflect varying preferences with regard to how much control the system designer wants to exert on the GM (and by extension, those who play in the system). A good additional clue as to how control-oriented a system designer is, is the amount of flex built into the system. That is, are the rules designed as a framework upon which the GM can impose his own experience and sensibilities, or is the designer's package so rigorous that it regulates every aspect of gaming time, up to and including the biological habits of players? (There's a name for the latter. And you know what it is.....)

Happily, most games are closer to the former example than the latter. Just as happily, most GMs are closer in mind set to the former attitude than they are to the latter. It's not always necessary that you know what key the banshee was singing in. You don't have to know what model bull's-eye lamp the party is carrying. The trick for both designer and GM is to know how much detail enhances the game, and how much (and in what areas) detracts from it. And an awful lot of figuring that out comes down to matters of taste and/or preference. Generally, the market does the sorting out at the design level. It may be that "General Lee and the Turtle Boats of Doom" is the most historically accurate account of the Korean repulse of Japan ever created, but few folks (if any) may want to spend hours working through fog and stormy sea mechanics to get to the enemy navy. Much of the historical confrontation hinged on weather, but weather is something most gamers can do little about other than take it on the chin (unless Amaratsu is riding shotgun). And, if it's not fun, Gary Gamer and Rhonda Role-Player won't be beating feet down to the local gaming store to stock up on the game and "Deep Sea Tidal/Current (still more from that other page back there): Action Modules". Designers almost always design for their own tastes; if their games sell, their ability to tap into a popular taste ensures that they will be able to continue design as a means of making money. If there is a market for "Real Time Gaming Systems", these will flourish. Certainly, from the standpoint of a lazy GM or players, systems with every nuance spelled out in excruciating detail have the virtue of (with a little or a lot of rote memory) being virtually idiot-proof to both run and play in.

And some folks enjoy minutiae. I tend to get a little suspicious when I find myself in one of these designs (I call them "overdesigned".) They pander to the uninspired, and leave little or no room for improvisation by either GM or player.

At the other end of the scale is anarchy. Game designs that say: "You are on a mining colony in Ganymede. Bad monsters are about. You have plasma rifles. Good Luck." How successful these designs are going to be depend almost entirely on the wits of the GM. And the players. Which sort of brings us (at last) to the point of all of this. Systems as designed are seldom run unaltered. A GM with any sort of experience to draw upon will seldom be able to resist the urge to modify the printed page instructions. Most designers know this when they design; indeed, most games are designed to be modified "in the field" and, in some enlightened games, these modifications are sometimes adopted for later releases of the game in question.

But I haven't really addressed the simple vs. complex question. Which is "better" is really a question of which you prefer. Which I prefer, as often as not, depends upon a number of factors:

1) Who's running the game? Do I know and trust them to work around any design shortcomings? If they're new (to my experience), do I know the game dynamics as written well enough to enjoy the thing as written?
2) Wargaming vs. Fantasy RPG: in historical recreation gaming, my personal tolerance for complexity and looking at the "small stuff" is greater that it is in a fantasy RPG.....I'm not sure why.
3) How much time do I have? If this is a one-shot, I sure don't want to wade through 300 pages of worldbuilding and "levitation during a sunspot wider that 200 mi. across" mechanics.
4) Are there any anal retentives in the party? Will this trait enhance the adventure, or serve to drive a stake through its quiescent heart?

For the record, then, a generic statement. I like a game (when I have the time) of moderate complexity, with plausible mechanics, run by a GM who can keep the pace manic but not kamikaze, and without PCs who are obsessed with the geomorphism of every corridor ventured down.

Well, so much for the topic of the issue. I guess it's time for.....

MAILING COMMENTS FOR MOTIVE #2***

COVER/JOHN: Nice work, John.......is this someone for Sersus to play with?

WOE: A.J. & Jess could use an area code; how about (404). As for me, the ? where my phone # should be will probably remain—— it's amazing how APAE sometimes circulate, and I have enough crank calls from SCAland already. If any of y'all want the number privately, of course, I'm happy to supply it.....

MORE to WOE: The roster is shaping up nicely; congratulations to the OE and all his unindicted co-conspirators.....

JONATHAN: Thanks for the comments, and for the topic suggestion for this mailing. ///As a neo-Champions player, I've not yet tripped over Pentangle—— just as well, as my character had all he could handle with Foxbat.///I like the Sersus writing.....the character is credible, articulate (to a point), dimensional, and, I suspect, possessed of more depth than he has so far shared.

STEWART: It would be easy for me to overreact to your manifesto re. mailing comments on page 2, but it would also be foolish. In 1981, for an APA entitled MYRIAD, I swore mighty oaths that I would not get enmeshed in mailing comments.....they flew in the face of what we were supposed to be doing, taking time, energy, and space away from more focused discussions of the worlds of science fiction and fantasy (and their attendant phenomena).

Now, some 9 years later, I've become a shameless panderer to the ascendency of the mailing comment. What happened?

Well, what happened was (pause here for seraphic music) I discovered that I was was writing in an APA for reasons that mostly sidestepped any cogent observations on the higher meaning of S.F. and Fantasy. My take on those (alternate) realities was hardly definitive. Instead, I was shelling out the bucks in APAdom for much the same reason I continue to pursue other communal hobbies.

The People.

The more I see, and do, and live, the more I'm convinced that good people are what make life worthwhile. In spite of the (at times, prodigious amounts of) bullshit associated with the SCA, good people keep me coming back. And so it is with Fandom in general and APA hacking in particular.

And the dynamic in APAE is special.....it's not merely me presenting my view and you reacting to it. It's Peter expressing a notion, which draws a response from Deena, who's take on the issue is challenged by A.J......and so on. A certain amount of philosophical cuisinarting, over time, goes to the very heart of what makes the logistical inconvenience of churning these mothers out so very rewarding (at least, to me). Sure, we could set up 20 outside dialogues, but it would lack the frisson of the possibilities for synthesis presented by the unique characteristics of this (semi) public forum.

Besides, I can't afford the phone bills.

Having said (to death) the above, the point you make about the ease with which this exercise can become more involuted and self-indulgent than a Geraldo show cannot be stressed too highly. As time goes by, the temptation to pour all of one's MOTIVE energies into MCs may be stronger. The informational content of one's zine should retain primacy, but I have come to believe that an APA without MCs is an effort which has denied itself a unique opportunity at cross-pollination.

NATTER BREAK**************

Which leads us to Head's Maxim for Well-Hung MCs: When drafting a mailing comment, go back. Read it over. Now, put the worst interpretive construction on the words you possibly can. Are you really communicating exactly what you want to? Lenny Bruce was right—— words are weapons. Use your words carefully .....it is easy to bruise others. If you doubt this, take a look at the last MOTIVE, where some folks came off sounding a bit brusquer, I suspect, than they intended. Remember, nuance is fiendishly difficult to convey on paper, and try to....."Be Excellent to Each Other."

**********END NATTER BREAK

MORE to STEWART: Sorry about the interruption, Stewart, and sorry for the extended polemic, but your reservations deserved a comprehensive response, and by answering in MOTIVE, now everyone here knows how I feel (and, it saves on postage.....). 'Nuff said.

.....at least, on that. Seeing Phase 1 of your character studies reminds me of how narrow my RPG experience has been: AD&D, a little RQ3, a dash of Champions, a hint of Space Gothic.....and miles to go before I sleep.///Stannis Floried.....ILOL!///A question which could be directed in a number of different directions about printing character sheets: is this designed to release a pre-built character to a wider audience, or am I reading too much into this?///You know, if you're really not into Mailing Comments, boy has this been a colossal waste of time......See you nexty.

CHAD: Thanks for the Operation: Mindgames worldview/scenarios. As a person playing my first Champions character (a telepath), it was useful to see how Psi freely functions in a Champions multiverse. Perhaps I'll be more psychically alert in character from here on.///My award for best Playdate title: Funky Cold Medina.......a classic.///Who are those terribly cute folks waiting for Connie's head?///More later.......

CARL & PAT: Re immature GMs: I've always found "voting with my feet" to be an effective counter.///Along those same lines: I have seen times when a "bad fit" (different approaches to playing/running an adventure) was confused with an "incorrect" world-view (I'm right— you're wrong). For those times when bad karma threatens to overwhelm, it might be useful to re-analyze the mix of players. I've got great friends I can't imagine gaming with, simply because most gaming contexts aggravate mutual personality quirks most likely to grate against each other.

Pat, you've certainly whetted my appetite for more Sea Giant lore.///Was "serf" (top p. 6) an intentional typo? If so, bravo....if not, Oops!///Otherwise, RAEBNC.

JOHN: Loved the art/thanks for the scripts for "The Wierdness".///Your view of PRIMUS is obviously much different from the jaundiced look or two I've had.///24 pages of character printout at a time is about three times more than could hold my interest. Without supporting frameworks, I suspect these dossiers will be of more value in retrospect, when I have more of a context into which they can be plugged (by the way, the word is spelled "transmission").

Running the Mandela clip with no comment left it a little unclear as to whether you agreed or disagreed with the sentiments. I mean, I think I know how you feel, but for someone who doesn't know you.....well, you get the idea.

WALTER: Good to have you back.///One gets the distinct impression that Moringill is just a hair off the beaten track (sorta reminds me of a place called Brigadoon.....).///And thanks for the map. I look forward to more from Rothbourg in the future.

ME: Layout is a little haphazard.....clearer section demarcation would be helpful.....if only I ever get fully automated.....

PETER: If you are not eaten by grizzly bears, who knows, you might even get to read this.///I liked the gaming history, especially the saga of Craban the Convoluted.///That's "masturbatory".....///Re the Gareis way to MCs: Well, I know that the numbered business with no names was irksome (and not just to me)....Patrick McGoohan is not the only one sensitive about such things./// Maybe Wayne was able to follow your comment to him as OE (#13)—— I know I didn't. ...///See the natter break in my comment to Stewart thisty.///Is time really a vagrant? (IAJS). See you in Babylon, mon.....

JACKIE & NICKY: I'd like to play with the statement "No Character ever believes he is a villain." While this has been classically true in drama, some modern fictional conventions have given us the neurotic "anti-hero" who, at the very least, is so wracked by self-doubt so as to be very unsure of the "hero within." Like, for instance, your average Thomas Covenant. Sure, he gets his moments of heroic reassurance, and even a conventional elevation at the end, but the fabric of his existance (especially in the early books) is the stuff of doubt.

Re problem players: there are all sorts of reasons why people spend so much time, emotion, and energy in RPGs. For some people, these games are less-threat filled surrogates for developing a personality in the "real world". When a person gets into a character rut, this is generally an indication of how obsessive they have become in trying to target a specific "wish-fulfillment" set. This behavior is usually born of low self-esteem, leaving the person doubly sensitive to external "suggestions" for constructive modification. What you may be dealing with is not so much "lack of acting ability" as it is the inability of the individual to distance themself from their idealized set. In this circular frame of mind, desire and reality trip all over each other, and become difficult to sort out.

What to do? The depth of your involvement will be tied directly to how you feel towards this person. Aiding someone in this sort of growth process can be very time-consuming and emotionally draining. Also, you have no guarantee of desired results. Only you can decide where the line has to be drawn in this particular case (I know this wasn't much help, but thorny problems like this seldom have simple solutions).

I like Tut. But then, I like cats.///NPCs are constructs that should almost always be generated by somebody other than the builder of the world they will inhabit (said to provoke comment). As always, enjoyed your insights on gaming.

MICHAEL: Thanks for the data return (and yes, I probably am that retentive)./// Amperion has something in common with Paul Thibideaux (my Champions critter).....aquaphobia (not to be confused with Iraqnaphobia.....).

KEVIN & SONIA: Nice introductory biographies./// I guess I blew it not making the CoC session set in Athens.....once again my impeccable sense of timing self-destructs. I still hope to play in this particular pond at some point, even though my non-attendance might be construed as disinterest. It weren't. Sorry R Us.///Re the dagger in "Beneath the Waves", have you seen the Golden Child? Just curious.

Re yr ct. me: what was a morally upright doing in your pajamas, anyway?/// Re games: yes, I do have at least elementary playing knowledge of the games I have run in here (so far). As for Fox & Geese, it you play a lot of checkers, and have become good at en masse advancement, your chances to avoid having your goose cooked are enhanced.///See you later.....

DARRELL: You were a little unclear; do you play Fox & Geese with real foxes?/// Am I right in assuming that you feel most comfortable gaming in the Champions universe?

GREG: Oh Goody! Someone who writes knowledgebly (sp) about pothunters.....is there an Anthro in your closet somewheres??? As much as I enjoyed "The Snake of Forever", the phrase "Lead teeth chewed a tree" was a bit....much. I'll hazard a guess as to the Big Bad Thing in the Woods.....are we talking "Uktena" here? If so, I recommend Darkthunder's Way and Sunshaker's War by Tom Deitz. They are the two latest chapters in the saga of David Sullivan. As for your story: you've whetted my appetite—— press on.

KEITH & DEENA: Re rules in RPGs: they are conventions of communal conduct; for a given RPG reality, the functional equivalent of real-world laws. If that postulate holds, here's one to grok: the possibility of a PC who doesn't follow the rules. When he gets caught, he pays a previously specified penalty (hey, just like life). Just a thought.....///Yes, I'd like to see more wargame-oriented stuff (or stuff about oriental wargames....).

Glad you wrote up "Their Finest Hour"—— I'd like to see a N. Atlantic U-Boat analogue.///Re yr ct Peter: Are you really "almost in shock with disbelief"? Why do I have problems conjuring up that image?///"Darrell's Dildos"??? Come on. You can tell Uncle Gil. What gives here?///Diplomacy. Da. (I wanna be Saddam...)

And as for you, Deena, neat & nifty it were.///Thanks in print for the Champions invite...Paul still has some growing to do.....///Re worldviews in RPGs: I've played w/ you as GM. Played w/ Peter as GM. I can safely say that your approach to the process is (systems aside) miles apart. I take good things from both approaches, and enjoy both for different reasons. He ain't right or wrong. Neither are you. Just different. And that's just about fine for me. Capisce?

What's this pike named Muskie? Did he run for President?///Much grace por le diccionaire pronunciacione.///Aha! Now I see why Harlequin was so familiar for you...speaking of which, you could really jazz up the graphic look of your zine w/ some pictures....the aforementioned Penthouse layout (giggle) springs to mind. ///Take care—— see you in the bayou.

WAYNE: Actually, my second choice for you after Don Knotts would have been..... AUNT BEA!!!!!......with Deena as Floyd the Barber.....which would make Keith.....Ohmigawd!!! Keith is...is....Opie!!!!! Aieeeeeeeeeeeee!!!!!!!!!/// Your time-out corner was a good Hog Pre-empt solution. I (as you may have noticed) tend not to be terribly goal-oriented as a PC—— perhaps to contrast with the real-world Type-A tendencies which I have.///You mean there are folks out there who really eat Funions? Y-u-u-c-k!///R2-SOB! ILOL&TSU (Reads a little like a metallic Abe Fist...).///Thew! That wasth a closeth one! Thanks for the background.///Whence comest "Successful Stories of Science"?///I can't believe Wild at Heart hasn't opened here yet (Aug. 27). Grrrrr.///On a personal note: I have it on good authority—— the light at the end of the tunnel is not an oncoming train (despite recent events that might suggest otherwise.....).

ROBERT & A.J. & JESS & SCOTT & JAY: Hey, where the heck were you guys? I missed you all.....

SO ENDS the Mailing Comments for MOTIVE #2, and so must this edition of TIAF, as I am required by circumstance of time and money to be brief. Next time, a game or two to make up for this outing's dearth, but I must close for now, for you see.....The Game is a Foot........See you all in 60............

DEATH TO ALL FANATICS

MOTIVE 3

Featuring Null and Void

c/o Stewart MacWilliam, Rt#1 Box 45, Tryon, NC 28782 Telephone: (704) 894-3200 FAX: (704) 894-3485

Who Is Void?

The Void currently resides in a luxurious second-floor walk-up, styled as a Mediterranean villa, deep in the Florida Everglades (just across the street from the new Wal-Mart). His office is a dimly-lit, overenthusiastically ventilated closet at the end of a cul-de-sac on the top floor of the Administration Building of the University of Miami. He doesn't spend much time there, as it seems none of the multitude of keys he was issued will unlock it. He was forced to resign from the Fashion Police when he was observed attempting to purchase a U.M. 'Canes 1989 NCAA Champs t-shirt. Something about that knock-kneed Ibis cradling a pigskin is just unaesthetically unconscionable. His hobbies include commuting, standing in line, and looking for excuses to avoid unpacking.

Who Is Null?

Good question. Lately, Null has been so busy typing and editing The Void's epic Mind Games narrative, that he has nearly lost his own, already marginal, sense of identity. Maybe by next issue he will have decided.

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One Funky PC page 2

More Mind Games page 5

A Modest Proposal page 19

An Infantile Response To Criticism page 20

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People I Have Been

by Null

As those of you who were here last issue will recall, I began an account of all the characters I could recall playing. This was to be the conclusion of that article, but once I got typing on these folks, I discovered that I could pad this account out for some time. The characters from this period are so much more interesting (to me at leas [also, as you might have noticed, I have a tendency to get sidetracked and ramble on a bit]), that's there's lots more to say about them. Therefore, I have decided to make this into an ongoing column. I will also occasionally include character sheets when it seems appropriate.

Knuckles Red McGee (no relation to Rick)

Knuckles is not a goddamn monkey, not even a goddamn telepathic, talking, hard-drinking, cigar smoking, blues guitar playing, monkey. He's a telepathic, talking, hard-drinking, cigar smoking, blues guitar playing, orangutan. Don't call him a monkey. One fool who called him a monkey ended up mindcontrolled into mooning a TV-13 news team....live.

Knuckles was created for a one-shot interactive game, my second or third week at the Asheville Gaming Club (or UNCA Adventure Gaming Society or Asheville Gaming Society or whatever—heretofore to be referred to for brevity's sake [as you can tell from all these regressive digressions, brevity is very important to me, especially since I'll probably have to mail this issue of Motive to Wayne] as "AGS"), when I was determined to make an impression as not just another gamer. I think I succeeded, since some time later, John Covey (Kovey? Covie? Kovie? Qoavvy? Khaddafi? ... I don't know), the man who gave us Fathom the underwater detective, told me that Knuckles was the weirdest character he'd ever played with. Knuckles was such fun that I reworked him later as a Champions character.

In brief (yeah, right), Knuckles is an orangutan who was nicked from his home in the jungles of Southeast Asia, and hauled off to a laboratory where scientists working for GENEX performed cruel and horrible experiments upon him, in hopes of unlocking some heretofore (I'm overusing this word, aren't I?) unlocked secret of the universe, or at least of orangutankind. Said scientists did something right (or wrong, depending on how you choose to look at it), and Knuckles achieved sentience. Along with sapience came the power of telepathy, perhaps a power potentially available to all sapients under the proper conditions. When Knuckles communicated his fear and despair, along with his confusion brought on by his expanded self-awareness, the GENEX people went nuts. All sorts of new experts and top men (used in the generic sense of course, some of the top men were women) were called in to observe, and later tinker with, the product of their great triumph.

In order to test the theory that Knuckles was truly sentient, GENEX surgically modified his throat so he could learn to speak. This proved so successful that they then went on to modify his hands to allow more efficient tool use. This alteration in their subjects proved to be a mistake, though, because he then made his escape. Rumor has it that Knuckles killed some employees of GENEX on his way out, but neither he nor the company will comment on this. (In fact, GENEX officially denies any involvement in Knuckles' origin at all, claiming that he has them confused with one of their competitors, Humanadyne.

The newly-free orangutan took refuge in a run-down building which turned out to be a nightclub. The headliner that night, Little Elmo, a 71-year-old bluesman from Chicago, discovered Knuckles in his dressing room, eating the contents of a fruit basket given him by a fan. The orangutan simultaneously sent thoughts of desperation and begged not to be taken back. The double-whammy caught Little Elmo's interest, and he sat down and talked to his visitor. That night Knuckles was introduced to what were to become three of his greatest loves: whiskey, cigars, and the blues.

Little Elmo found an overcoat and a big old hat for his new friend, and Knuckles left the club with him as his "entourage" ("I always wanted one of those," he said.) Elmo also gave Knuckles his name: Knuckles because of his huge hands; Red because of the color of his hair; and McGee for monkey. (Knuckles has since discovered the distinction between the words monkey and orangutan [remember, language was still a new concept to him at the time of his naming, and his vocabulary was quite limited], and although he now takes offence at being called a monkey, he explains, "McGee is who I am, and McGee is who I'll be.'')

Knuckles and Elmo travelled together for about a year, and Knuckles was slowly "civilized". Elmo introduced him to many of his contemporaries, men who had "seen 'most everything", and to whom a talking orangutan who lived for the blues, was far less alien than anyone else who didn't. Soon Knuckles acquired a guitar of his own, and began learning to play with teachers money couldn't buy. The old men loved jamming with Knuckles, with those big funky hands of his, he could do some fretwork that was physiologically impossible for them, even if their hands weren't arthritic.

When Little Elmo died, Knuckles decided to try to make it on his own. He already had a quiet reputation among those in the know in the blues scene, and so he was able to tag along from town to town, riding with whoever was going somewhere, jamming with and learning from the best.

Eventually, inevitably, Knuckles got tangled up with super-types. Living in the Champions Universe, you couldn't swing a dead monkey without hitting a half-dozen of 'em. Through his adventures with the longjohn set, Knuckles learned how to interact with the mainstream of the modern American world. It took a while though. Most people don't react well to an orangutan who talks like an old black man, and Knuckles doesn't react well to folks not reacting well to him. He has been known to mindcontrol people to do some pretty rude things when they treat him like a freak or an animal (generally fairly appropriate things such as acting like freaks or animals). As Knuckles says, "I ain't a freak. I'm perfectly normal for a talking orangutan."

Although he liked some of those "hero" folks, especially that Shadowjack guy, Knuckles never considered himself one. He is a musician, a bluesman('tang), and his aspirations lie in that field. If encountered in a game, he is most likely to be encountered in a nightclub or music store, possibly a dark bar, but his sense of adventure and his desire to experience as much as possible of as much as possible, can lead him into trouble (the kind that follows PCs around).

As a result of his public adventures with the aforementioned superheroes, Knuckles is now known to the general public, and has begun to draw sizeable crowds at his concerts. His first album, *I Ain't No Monkey,* has been released, and he is currently on tour with his new back-up band the Blues Zoo. A video for the title track of the album is currently in heavy rotation on MTV, and features cameos by, among others, John Lee Hooker, Bonnie Raitt, Bruce Willis, Shadowjack, Lee Atwater, Michael "I *was* a Monkee" Nesmith, and the late Stevie Ray Vaughn.

In playing Knuckles, I have tried to demonstrate that he is not a human in a monkey (ORANGUTAN!) suit, but is indeed a member of another species. I have portrayed Knuckles as being inconsiderate of and/or oblivious to many human hangups. He believes in the law of the jungle in a way that no human, even the most "primitive" can. Man's laws, on the other hand seem for the most part arbitrary and foolish to him, and he only pays attention to them when he knows that doing otherwise can get him in serious trouble. Knuckles will kill without compunction if he feels threatened, or that those he cares for are threatened; but he knows enough not to do so in front of potential witnesses. He has, and quite probably will again, mindcontrolled people into taking actions which were potentially lethal. He is not callous, or cruel, but he is pragmatic.

Knuckles has a tragic element: he is the only one of his kind. He cannot ever hope to find a mate of his own species. To take a regular orangutan for a mate would be like marrying a lobotomy patient. To mate with a human woman would be absurd, fruitless, and unappealing. This is one of the reasons Knuckles is a bluesman, he has a sense of complete loneliness unknown by any human. He is not a somber person, though, he is in turns a clown, a starry-eyed kid, a philosopher, an innocent. He is rude, whimsical, passionate, ebullient. He loves his friends and hates his enemies. He is alive, and enjoys being so. He is great fun to play, although opportunities to play him have been scarce lately.

Knuckles Red McGee

Val	Char	Cost
20	STR	10
23	DEX	39
18	CON	16
10	BODY	0
23	INT	13
29	EGO	38
20	PRE	10
6	COM	-2
3	PD	0
4	ED	0
6	SPD	27
7	REC	0
36	END	0
26	STUN	0
		151

100+	Disadvantages
15	Distinctive Features: Orangutan
10	Public ID
15	Enraged when Animals Mistreated 14-/rec 8-
25	Beserk when Confined 14-/rec 8-
10	Hatred of People in Lab Coats
20	Impetuous
30	Hunted by PSI 11-
30	Hunted by GENEX 14-
10	Requires Specialized Medical Care (Vet)
15	Insensitive to Human Inhibitions
15	Reputation: Blues Animal 11- (extreme)
10	Vengeful
60	Experience
365	Disadvantage Total

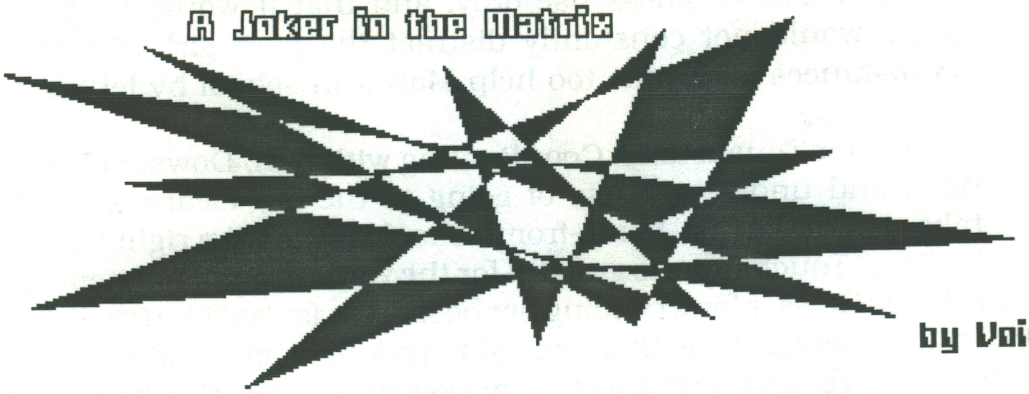
Cost	Powers	END
60	90 pt Multipower * OIF—Electrodes in Skull	
6u	6d6 Ego attack,) END *	
6u	12d6 Telepathy, 0 END *	
6u	12d6 Mind Control, 0 END *	
14	Mind Link, up to any 16 willing musicians, only when participants are playing (-1) *	
5	5 pts Mental Defense (11 total)	
30	+20 PD/+10 ED Armor, OIF Jacket	
15	30 pt Multipower § OAF Pistol (Mauser)	
1u	2d6 RKA 16 uses §	
1u	+10d6 HA §	3

	Skills & Talents
9	Acrobatics 17-
9	Breakfall 17-
11	Climbing 17-
7	Streetwise 15-
3	Contortionist 14-
9	Survival 14-
3	Electronics 11-
3	KS: Music World 14-
6	PS: Musician 17-
4	Concealed Weapon Permit (in U.S.), Passport, International Driver's License
1	Contact: Lee Atwater 8-
5	Well Off
214	Powers & Skills
151	Attributes
365	Total

OCV: 8 **DCV:** 8 **ECV:** 10 **Phases:** 2,4,6,8,10,12

PD: 23(20 res.) **ED:** 14(10 res.) **MD:** 11

A Joker in the Matrix



by Void

Now that I've had more time to reflect, and with 60-odd channels of TV bringing me a nigh-unprecedented spate of reruns and syndication, and in the interest of academic accountability, I must append my list of (im)probable influences to include Hundall & Johnson's wonderful little graphic series Interface (these guys and I must be either on the same Jungian wavelength, or else we're all the victims of some insidious mindcontrol plot... Hmmmmm...), Edward Woodward's immaculate characterization of The Equalizer, the magnificent Max Headroom series, Otomo's incomparably brilliant opus Akira, Cronenberg's films Scanners and Videodrome, and Karen Kopins, who will be cast to play Dr. Frost in the movie version, to please Null.

Our Story So Far:

Rod "**Dowser**" Downs, a psychic specializing in tracking individuals, is hired by **Dr. Karen Frost**, a neuroscientist, to rescue her psionic niece, Ashton "**Touchstone**" Coventry from the clutches of **PSI**, a criminal organization of mentalists. **Psypher** is a shapeshifting former member of **PSI** who's also recruited for the task.

Once the pair infiltrate **PSI**, they learn from **Touchstone** that **Dr. Frost** is actually the villainous **Motivator**. As **Motivator** is even more dangerous than **PSI**, **Psypher** and **Dowser** decide to remain undercover in **PSI**, while attempting to exact their respective vengeance upon its leadership, in addition to staying alive.

PSI, of course, has its own objectives...

5 May 1990 Playdate

Along for the Ride
—or—
"Why is this turning into Twin Peaks?"
—or—
"It's too cerebral for me..." (Clay's critique)
—or—
"Psypher, no matter where you go, you're *you* there!"
—or—
If a man you hardly know suddenly offers to be your experimental guinea pig, that's Impulse!

The kids (save Touchstone) finish up school and go on to Christmas break, but Matrix has a tough time with her exams because folks keep calling her up on the mindlink to coordinate their last minute Christmas shopping. Darke issues a memo later to the effect that the mindlink is for official PSI business use only, and that it would be greatly appreciated if the members would not constantly distract the poor girl with trivial messages, under no circumstances is anyone too help Matrix in school by letting her cheat on exams, and so on.

Psypher goes out shopping for Touchstone. Coordinating with him, Dowser also gets some stuff from her room, and under pretense of going to the dry cleaners (Mirage confronts him briefly), takes it and the just-home-from-school Matrix ("I'm right with you on this.") on a "secret mission." Touchstone is grateful for the various personal items and sundries he brings, but chides Dowser for wrinkling her best dress (at least he tried). They then contact Psypher, still out shopping, with a request to pick up some stuff so she can cook dinner. Startled by the stereophonic request (from Dowser and Matrix), he recovers and purchases the required lobster. Matrix seems not to have noticed the additional mindlink.

Touchstone fixes dinner, but only Psypher feels like eating deep-fried breaded lobster. Dowser takes Matrix back to Chez Darke. Before they leave, he again discusses his interest over Force's recovery with Psypher, and the two of them remember that it was Dr. Frost who repaired the student's injuries. Touchstone expresses her concern about it.

Dowser goes out to PSITRAIN, but finds no one at home. A quick check through Matrix informs him that Soulfire suggested they all go out to a movie, so he, Ego, Medusa, and the kiddies have gone to the mall for dinner and to catch a show at the cineplex. Dowser and Matrix are invited to join.

Back at Touchstone's flop, Psypher, upon learning this, decides that it would be a choice opportunity to allow her to observe Force and use her secret invisible telepathy to see where his head's at. Psypher disguises her, and using a minimum of mindlink activity (which Medusa or Ego might detect), they sneak into the theater incognito as "Dad-man & Son-boy", grabbing seats near the back. The PSITRAINDIVers (alternatives such as PSCHOOL and PSTUDENTS are suggested) all come in and sit down front, none the wiser. Touchstone, however, is unable to get more than a superficial reading from Force, and the results are disappointingly inconclusive (so too, is the feature, Back to the Future II). On the way out of the film, Dowser has an inspiration, involving untied shoelaces, and manages to "accidentally" trip into Force, knocking him back a bit. The hoped-for instinctive manifestation of telekinesis is not forthcoming, and the young athlete is unharmed simply due to his excellent physical conditioning. The PSITRAINDIV repairs to the farm, and Dowser takes Matrix back to Maison Darke. "Dad-man" drops "Son-boy" off via taxi at the Residence Inn. Psypher notices a present has been delivered to her, but his inquiry is offhandedly rebuffed with an explanation that it is from one of her "relatives". Unconvinced, he returns to his apartment.

When Dowser returns home he is quietly confronted by Darke, who inquires as to Touchstone's well-being. He assures the surprised clairvoyant that Matrix has not "betrayed" his confidence, but is simply not clever enough to withstand a subtle, casual interrogation. He expresses his concern for little Ashton, and confides that he was afraid that she'd react this way once "Karen" came into the fold.

Dowser remarks that the girl is scared out of her wits, since she is fleeing from Motivator. Darke informs him that Ashton Coventry isn't fleeing from Motivator, she is Motivator. As this does not contradict the info Dowser uncovered in England, he suddenly realizes that it is all too possibly true. Darke informs him that she wasn't a suspect in the suicides-cum-murders by her own design. Only the Inquisitor's intensive probing of her memory (with a little help from Pluto) was able to uncover her secret identity. She's an extraordinarily bright girl, and although her pathological lying is admittedly difficult to deal with, he felt she would be a crucially useful addition to PSI. Darke also mentions that he had been interested in recruiting the scientific skills of Dr. Frost (who had been the girl's guardian) for some time, but Psymon's normal methods had not been successful. When the PCs showed up on his doorstep with their wild tale of being hunted by Dr. Frost, the notorious "Motivator", his interest had been piqued. He convinced Omega not to kill them, but to let them into PSI provisionally, hoping the Dr. Frost was seeking to contact PSI on her own terms.

He goes on at some length with the typical erudite and visionary megalomaniacal spiel, about how PSI has a moral mandate for a "custodianship" sort of world dominion. He reveals how delighted he was to learn that Karen shares his conviction that metahumans have a sacred responsibility to protect society from itself at the expense of more petty concerns, and that psis, being far and away the most powerful metahumans, are obligated to a leadership capacity in the emerging new world order, as a sort of unseen hand upon the tiller of history.

He stresses how important it is that Ashton rejoin PSI. It is in the best interests of her and the "family" and in fact, the world in general. He wants PSI to spend a happy Christmas together, hoping it will be a significant bonding experience which reinforces the immanent sense of purpose he seeks to instill in PSI.

Dowser pretends to have swallowed all this rhetorical diarrhea, and Darke retires to his study to finish a little paperwork before bed.

Over their private mindlink, Dowser wakes Psypher, who insists on an emergency meeting. They go to a Waffle House, and argue at some length (in virtual silence) about Ashton. Dowser is convinced that she is quite likely Motivator, as it would explain a lot of things, citing *modus operandi* details from the case files, and Darke's decision to accept them into PSI. Psypher, on the other hand, is certain that even though she is an incorrigible liar, she is too compassionate to be a serial killer, citing her reaction to Mind Slayer's execution of Omen, and his own killing of Inquisitor, as well as the confidences (such as her invisible telepathy) she trusted him with.

The next day, anxious to ask her a few questions, Psypher arrives earlier than expected, and a reluctant Ashton lets him in. She thought she had asked him to "always call first", and Psypher begins to suspect that she is not alone in the room. Eventually, due to unfortunate events, the visitor is forced to reveal himself. Ashton introduces the rather scarred gentleman as her "Uncle Angus from England", but once Dowser is called in, the PCs tentatively identify him as the allegedly deceased superhero/supervillain Notion. He has come to see how Ashton liked the jewelry he sent her (which he has allowed her to open), and try to convince her to rejoin PSI.

Notion tells the PCs that he knew Ashton's mother, Dowser wracks his brain trying to recall as much as he can about Angus MacLachlin, and Ashton complains that Dr. Frost is interfering again. Notion counters by reminding her that the "project" of Ashton's infiltrating PSI to get revenge for her parents' murder was the good doctor's idea to begin with, and that Karen has been calling the shots from the git. He suggests that the unexpected development of Mind Slayer's pregnancy and/or the incident with Mentalla may have caused her to revise the script and decide to become involved with PSI herself.

After a lengthy conversation, in which Psypher brings up the possibility that Touchstone herself could be being mindcontrolled, and decides that Notion probably did know her mother and might in fact really be her uncle (or even her father), Ashton is convinced by the three of them to return to PSI. Notion confides in Psypher that it is certainly better for her than remaining in Europe, and ominously alludes to an "attack by Eurostar". Dowser gets a fix on Notion, while Touchstone gathers her belongings. After saying goodbye and Merry Christmas (thanks for the wonderful gift!) to Uncle Angus, she departs with the PCs for PSIOPS.

After dropping the girl off and engaging her in conversation with Matrix about the adventure, Dowser tracks Notion heading rapidly west in his BMW, and he and Psypher decide to follow in the Jag. They end up following him west for over a day. Notion only stops for gas and to change a flat. The day before Christmas Eve, Matrix calls them on the mindlink to inquire as to their whereabouts, since Darke hadn't seen either of them all day. Psypher offers that that they are in Texas, "looking for Luchenbach" to catch a Fabulous Thunderbirds concert. Matrix informs them that Counselor Darke expects them back for Christmas, and they promise they'll make it. Touchstone, mindlinked to Dowser, reads his mind, discovers what they're up to, and ask why. About 20 miles east of El Paso, they decide that Notion isn't going to stop anytime soon, and assume he is heading back to L.A. They turn around, and after stopping to get more appropriate presents for Mind Slayer, a stuffed armadillo for Touchstone, and some Lone Star Beer, they drive all night back to Nawlins.

The morning of Christmas Eve, they arrive roadweary at PSIOPS just as final preparations for the party are getting underway. At the party that evening (sort of a "psoirée"), it turns out that Dr. Frost is on the PCs Christmas list after all. Dowser notices that Impulse seems to literally be the "life of the party" even though she's a bit of a wallflower. He engages her in conversation, and they express a mutual interest in having him drop by PSITECH for testing and evaluation. They make a lab date for Monday.

At Christmas Morning convocation, Counselor Darke makes a stirring speech about achievements and goals and family and noble purpose and so on, culminating in the announcement of PSI's imminent "third generation" now carried in Mind Slayer's womb. The mood and response is indeed joyous and favorable, which doesn't surprise Dowser, as Impulse is right there.

The day is otherwise uneventful, save for a brief catfight between 'Slayer, the reigning Queen Bitch, and Ego, the would-be Usurper, which is quickly put down by Dr. Frost (the Heiress Presumptive). Returning to his apartment after all the festivities (and his obligatory performance as Santa Claus), Psypher finds a message on his answering machine from Mentalla, who's somewhere in Europe and wishes to meet privately with him after New Year's.

The next day, Psypher has his morning aikido lesson, then goes out to PSITECH, where Dowser is getting ready for his evaluation. Throughout the day-long procedure, Dowser attempts to get closer to the rather chilly Impulse, and finally asks her out to lunch later in the week. At Dr. Frost's suggestion, Psypher has some cell samples taken in an effort to get a genome map of him and thereby a possible clue to his identity. Psypher still hasn't told Dowser about Mentalla, but during a break in their respective examinations, hints that he may wish to borrow the halo Dr. Frost gave them, which is currently stashed in the trunk of the Jag. Dr. Frost reports that the genome results are inconclusive because it appears that Psypher has no fixed genetic code to analyze; his psychokinetics seem to operate not just on his cellular metabolism, but directly on the DNA in his body. Dowser eventually agrees to undergo Dr. Poe's psidrug treatment, and loses his mindlinks in the process.

The Great Debate:

The Shamanistic Focus:

Talisman or Fetish?

20 May 1990 Playdate

Post-Christmas Letdown
—or—
"There's always Boise!"
—or—
"I was hoping you would, but I didn't want to know you'd done it."
—or—
"I used to be paranoid, but now I'm just jaded."

Psypher decides to move to a new apartment before the first of the month, and continues his progress in aikido. After re-establishing the mindlink with Matrix, Dowser spends most of the week under surveillance at PSITECH, while Impulse observes the effects of "Dr. Poe's Magick Elixir" on his powers. His ego attack has been lost, but he has gained a mindscanning ability as an additional refinement of his clairvoyance. More interestingly, Impulse discovers that not only has his telepathy grown much stronger, but it is now invisible as well. They eventually go to lunch at Brennan's (where they are not served instant coffee), and Dowser spends most of the week studying up at PSITECH to improve his knowledge of mental powers. The rather self-possessed Impulse does, however, consent to give him her phone number.

On New Year's Eve, Omega returns to PSIOPS and reports that the PSIGUARD is in place. Each of the twelve major metropolitan centers of the U.S. in which PSI had previously operated now has a permanent "cell" of four PSIGUARDers established and undercover as part of the citizenry. Each cell is internally mindlinked together, and each of the cell leaders is mindlinked to Omega. As an intelligence network, the cells are generally not intended to take action, but merely observe and report interesting developments to PSI, as well as provide secure local centers of operation for PSIOPS.

A New Year's Eve party is held at PSIOPS for the adults, while the kiddies have their own shindig at PSITRAIN. Late New Year's Day, Psypher returns to his apartment and receives a phone call from Mentalla. She's in L.A. and wants to meet with him privately and in person. He suggests Houston, and she agrees, telling him to meet her at centerfield in the Astrodome at 0300 hours on the 3rd. He agrees, and tells her he'll be wearing a big floppy hat. She anticipates no trouble recognizing him under the circumstances.

Psypher calls Dowser via the mindlink with Matrix, to arrange a meet. Drawing on his experience with Matrix, Dowser attempts to use his mindscanning to locate Psypher, but fails. They meet at Waffle House for coffee and conversation.

Psypher asks for a "big favor" in the form of borrowing Dowser's car and some not-traceable-by PSI cash for a couple of days. Dowser tacitly tries to read his mind to find out why, but fails. Dowser decides to adopt the "less plans/less lies" strategy and doesn't pursue the matter further, but agrees to Psypher's "secret mission".

The next day, Psypher has aikido and a shower, then gets the car from Dowser, who preferring not to know, does not get a clairvoyant fix on him at the time. Psypher hits the road.

Dowser looks around for some kind of date idea for Impulse, but is surprised when she takes the initiative and suggests he take her to Woody Allen's Love and Death. He informs her that his Jag is in the shop, but she has no problem with picking him up in her Accord. She enjoys the film tremendously, and afterwards they go drinking at the Absinthe House, where she has more than a few Black Russians. The more sober Dowser drives back to her flat, where, with much drunken confusion, she gives him the keys so he can take her car back to his flop at PSIOPS. On the way home, he calls Matrix on the mindlink and inquires as to Psypher's condition. He also takes the opportunity to mindscan her, and she notices and reports his success back to him, along with the observation that, provided your powers are at all reliable, it isn't hard to locate someone you're mindlinked to in the first place. She is up watching some Fred & Ginger movie, and Psypher reports to her that he is "fine". Once back at PSIOPS, Mirage notices Dowser is driving Impulse's car, and inquires after her. Dowser explains what happened, and assures her not to worry.

Arriving in Houston, Psypher puts on the halo, concerned that the additional mental defense may prove necessary. He parks in a fairly remote corner of the Astrodome parking lot, and assumes the persona of a big, burly cop. As he enters the facility, he notices that it seems completely deserted with no guards to be found, and that all the appropriate doors and gates are unlocked. The big lights are even on. It occurs to him that Mentalla is probably quite capable of all this. He changes into Terry Brooks ("white chick from Connecticut"), complete with big floppy hat temporarily covering the metal band of the halo around "her" head. In response to his query about the rather ostentatious setting, Mentalla asks if he has come alone, and satisfied as to his answer, floats down (again, in low-profile clothing) from the rafters to confront him in the middle of the field.

She explains that they are in a position to be of mutual help to one another. Because of his unusual psychokinetic attack, for which there is no known defense, she seeks to recruit his assistance in a scheme to kill Dr. Destroyer. Although she does not expect Psypher to do so by himself, she says he could be an instrumental member of a team she is assembling for the express purpose of exacting revenge on the man. In return, she offers assistance to Psypher with his identity crisis. His interest is certainly piqued, but he wants some sort of guarantee that she can deliver on her end. She suggests that he ask Dr. Frost about Project SHAPE. He's unconvinced, but definitely interested, and she says that he can have a few days to think it over. She tells him that she'll call hm for a decision before she returns to Europe.

Taking his leave of her, Psypher drives back towards Nawlins until he becomes tired enough to stop and get a motel room. He removes the halo and stashes it back in the trunk, and gets some much-needed sleep.

Later that morning, Dowser rises early and decides to take Impulse the fixings for a Redeye. After pounding on her door for a while, he is instructed to use the keys (which he still has) to let himself in. Impulse is both hung-over and still drunk. She staggers off to spend the better part of an hour in the shower, while Dowser decides to cook some breakfast. After her shower, a bleary-eyed Impulse downs the Redeye and makes small talk about his powers over breakfast, until she suddenly realizes that she's going to be late for work. She throws on some clothes and Dowser drives her to PSITECH (or as it is known to the public, the Advanced Research Group [NASDAQ symbol ADVRG]). Many eyebrows are raised at their arrival, and Dowser overhears Dr. DeVille making some derogatory remark to himself about promiscuity.

Heading back to PSIOPS, Dowser calls Matrix at school over the mindlink and asks her to check on Psypher. Psypher reports that he is "in bed" (a bit of "truth editing") and that he will "talk" to Dowser later this P.M.

Back at PSIOPS, Dowser asks a favor of Mirage. He recounts the morning's events, and requests that she keep him informed of any vicious rumors which they might generate among the staff. Her eyebrows climb up her forehead, but the conversation is cut short by an incoming call to the Philanthropic Society.

Dowser asks to see Counselor Darke in his office. During the brief meeting (and smoke-off), Dowser expresses his desire to return to Vegas to investigate the possibility of recruiting the showgirl/high roller/whatever Meryl Jordan. Darke agrees that it is a good idea, but insists that Dowser be back by the end of the month, as there is an operation (now only in the preliminary planning stages) scheduled, and full membership participation is required.

They discuss which members of PSI should be on the mission team. Dowser suggests Mirage, but Darke needs her with him. Dowser suggests Ego, but Darke would rather keep her with Soulfire; and Soulfire is busy instructing the children. Dowser then suggests Mind Slayer, but they concur that she needs to remain where Dr. Frost can monitor her pregnancy. Dowser tentatively suggests Psypher, who has field experience with Ms. Jordan, but readily agrees when Darke suggests that Impulse might be the best choice to evaluate the quarry's powers in the field. In response to Darke's inquiry, Dowser responds that the Jag is in the shop. Darke decides to motor out to PSITECH and speak with Impulse about going on a field mission, as he's due out there anyway for a meting with the staff to discuss the status of various projects. He offers Dowser a ride, so he can use the PSICOMPuter to get familiar with Vegas. No info, of course, is available on the PSIGUARD cell, but Standard Operating Procedure will be for the cell to initiate contact with the OPS team.

Psypher, once back in his apartment, calls PSITECH and leaves a message for Dr. Frost to call him after work. While Dowser is getting the lowdown on Vegas, Darke comes over and informs him that Impulse will go with him, and at Dowser's request, he'll have Mirage make reservations so they can fly out in the morning.

Dr. Frost calls Psypher from her hotel room, and he invites himself over. She gives him her room number (with a touch of sarcasm in her voice, perhaps?) and he goes to the Omni in the guise of Terry Brooks. She lets him in and inquires if he had any problem finding the room (definitely a touch of sarcasm, no?) and tells him she's ordered room service.

He apologizes for the other night's mess, but she dismisses it as "just Ashton". He than rather bluntly asks her what she might know about a little project called SHAPE. Shocked, she tells him that it was a secret program of Dr. Destroyer's many years ago, and that it stood for something like "Super-Human Anthro-Polymorph Experiment" or somesuch. At this point, Room Service arrives with dinner, and Dr. Frost (being British and therefore polite to a fault) receives it, and shoos the lad off. She than proceeds to telepathically interrogate her dinner guest.

In response to her query about who told him, the answer "Oh, Mentalla." gets her quite excited. She calms down and sits down upon reading that no one else knows of the Astrodome meeting and what was discussed. But she gets fired right back up again at the "kill Destroyer" bit, becoming quite incredulous at the whole prospect.

In response to Psypher's remark that Mentalla knows all about him, Dr. Frost quips, "of course she does", but this is quickly abandoned when Psypher raises the possibility that PSI has somehow stolen him from Destroyer. "Of course not'" she tells him, but then probes deep into his memory (ignoring the "third eye" focus, which she, after all, designed) to quell his fear that he might be some sort of plant by Destroyer in PSI.

After reassuring him that he is not a "sleeper", she remarks that she has a speculum with Mentalla's name on it, and that she'd love to give the girl a neurophysiological once-over (under clinically controlled conditions, of course). He doesn't really care, and presses her for info on SHAPE. She remarks that many years ago, her mentor, Dr. Henkel, was involved in the project in Argentina before it was abandoned, and she (a little patronizingly) promises to check into it right away, although it may take a few days.

Psypher leaves Dr. Frost to her dinner and calls Dowser via Matrix. Dowser gets some PoBoys and a six of Dixie Beer and meets him at his flat where Psypher has switched back to Terry Buchannon (but it makes little difference, Dowser knows all the standard permutations).

They confront, and Dowser fills Psypher in on his planned excursion to Las Vegas. Psypher is coy about seeing Mentalla ("Remember the woman you met in Paris?" "I assume you don't mean Susan Anton."), and doesn't mention the conspiracy to kill Destroyer. Dowser decides he doesn't want to know why Mentalla wanted to see Psypher, and lets it drop. He does, however, persuade Psypher to accompany him and Impulse to Vegas.

Psypher calls Sensei Tanaka to inform him that an out-of-town trip is going to interrupt his aikido lessons for a week or so, and, as Dowser had expressed an interest, inquires about the possibility of his friend starting lessons. The response is favorable, and "Terry Buchannon" is told to bring Mr. Downs with him when he resumes his sessions.

Dowser calls Mirage at PSI, and tells her to get another set of tickets and reservations for Psypher, who's coming with them.

The rest of the evening is consumed with musings on the ethics of telepaths, and the lack of need for an excuse to take the Jag to the shop. Before retiring, Psypher leaves a message (in the style of one of those "celebrity answering machine tapes" that Rich Little does, this one as Jimmy Stewart) on his answering machine that he's "not in", in expectation of Mentalla's calling while he's gone.

Dowser returns to PSIOPS about 2200 hours, and searches the library for a good book to read on the plane. He finally settles on "Orient Express", and gets the itinerary and ticket stuff from Mirage. She informs him that they'll be staying at The Dunes. Omega has already left for the night to return to his own apartment, but he left instructions to the effect that the INTDIV cell will contact them in due course, once they've arrived and settled in. Dowser decides to snooze on the couch in front of the TV, and asks Mirage to wake him when the younger members come home.

After a while, Touchstone, Matrix, Torment, and Deuce (or "Shade" as she's often called) return from their "gang date". Soulfire, having dropped them off, returns to PSITRAIN with Force. Dowser asks Torment to take the team to the airport in the morning, and drop the Jag at an auto shop. As he needed to go by PSITECH anyway, he unenthusiastically agrees. Dowser then goes up and knocks on the door to the girls' suite, where he is told to "go away". At his explanation, however, that he only wanted to know what presents they wanted him to bring them from Las Vegas, he is welcomed into the sitting room by the excited young women.

A fairly fluffy conversation ensues, during which Dowser tries a little casual interrogation. He learns that Matrix is originally from New Jersey, and that her parents died in a tragic and fiery automobile accident (or, to use PSIOPS jargon Dowser has previously suspected refers to a tactical maneuver involving 'Slayer and Soulfire, a "T.F. double-A.") when she was very young. At Touchstone's tacit inquiry as to his apparent "deathwish", he responds in the negative, using his own invisible telepathy. Shocked at his new power, Touchstone threatens to "tell", but he smugly informs her that PSI already knows. This seems to pretty effectively shut her up.

The trio (Angela, Ashton, and Tannis) then proceed to get sidetracked into a discussion of how cute Keith (Force) is. Dowser casually asks after his health, and Touchstone scowls and snaps "he's just fine" and leaves it at that. Dowser decides he's had enough, and excuses himself as he has an early day tomorrow.

The next morning, the team heads out. As Psypher doesn't want to be seen in Las Vegas as Ms. Marks, he settles on his last documented identity as Terry Limato (male Japanese tourist). Mr. Downs, Limato-san, and Ms. Soyev board their plane and head for Vegas.

27 May 1990 Playdate

Sweeps Week
—or—
Toucha, toucha, toucha, touch me!
—or—
"Is this going to run like Paris, or are we gonna have a plan?"
—or—
"I don't know nothin' 'bout birthin' no babies!"
(note the Cerebus-like time dilation encroaching on the narrative)

The PCs re-establish their personal mindlink, and upon arrival in Vegas, take the waiting limo to their hotel. They have reserved three adjacent but non-adjoining rooms on the 14th floor overlooking the pool. As it is Friday night, they make dinner reservations for three and change into their formal evening wear. For Dowser, this consists of slipping on his tux and pocketing a phaser (cleverly disguised with an adhesive "Braun" label), but the lightly travelling Psypher simply "instant changes" his wardrobe.

Once they have been seated, Dowser mindscans out to 780 Nailhead Road and finds Meryl Jordan (codenamed "Bender") at home with company, but the limitations of his multipower keep him from getting a clairvoyant lock on her. The team decides to wait for the PSIGUARD to contact them, and has coffee and smokes after dinner. Conversation is light, covering such diverse topics as how members of PSI file their taxes and who's going to be Mind Slayer's Lamaze partner (Demerol is the most likely candidate). Impulse, having had a spot of red wine (with fish) for dinner, decides that she wants to go gambling.

After buying some chips and change on their expense-account credit cards, Psypher goes off to play video slots and poker while Dowser takes Impulse to play Roulette. She proceeds to lose quickly enough to put a real concern into Dowser, who suggests that perhaps Blackjack would be less costly and afford him an opportunity to experiment with his telepathy.

As he experiments, he is able to start winning fairly regularly and recoup enough to offset Impulse's earlier (and continuing) losses. He also notices that the crowd around the table is pretty happy. Psypher calls him up on their private mindlink to let the two know he's decided to go to a show, and will hang out in the bar afterwards.

Continuing at the Blackjack table, Dowser begins to notice that he is increasingly and intensely sexually aroused. As a matter of fact, everybody around him seems to be feeling horny and acting unusually friendly, most particularly Impulse, who is incessantly fondling him.

At last call Psypher leaves the bar (where he had been scoping hookers) and (in amused response to Dowser's call for assistance) gathers Dowser and Impulse. On the elevator ride up, Psypher studiously ignores the fact that Impulse is all over Dowser. She's also falling-down drunk. Getting the two of them upstairs, Psypher bids them goodnight, and ducks quickly into his room. Impulse drags Dowser into her room and kicks the door shut, but he balks, and she fumes, eventually tossing him out.

Dowser leaves her his room key and breaks into his room next door. He orders coffee and bribes the room service attendant for a fifth of bourbon. Over the private mindlink, he fills Psypher in on the situation. Psypher insists that Dowser had better resolve things with Impulse, avowing repeatedly that "hell hath no fury..."

Eventually, Dowser decides to try to talk to her "or something", and Psypher goes downstairs (muttering something about taking advantage of the ambiance) and scores one of the few remaining whores he had noticed in the bar. Dowser knocks on Impulse's door. Getting no answer, he picks the locks. She's passed out sprawled across the bed. He pulls up a chair and locks on to her, and tucks her in. He spends the rest of the night keeping a vigil with his bourbon and coffee.

Psypher meanwhile, is entertaining his companion with his "Ancient Chinese Secret". She's quite impressed. Once they're finally finished, she gives him her card and departs.

Dowser wakes Impulse at 0700. She inquires as to what he's doing in her room, and then after a sudden alarmed recollection and a quick falsifying check under the covers, inquires again with even more confusion. He explains that he was put off by what he felt was her unfair attempt to coerce him with her powers. Maybe she buys his story. Anyway, she promises him that "we'll talk later" and throws him out so she can grab a shower.

Utilizing Impulse's apparent fondness for long showers when hung-over, Psypher and Dowser then confer over some $1 breakfasts about how best to approach Bender and which "pside" to recruit her to. Absently fiddling with the card the prostitute gave him (since even though he changed clothes, it's still in his pocket), Psypher sheepishly notices that it is quite distinctly marked with a huge embossed Ψ. Calling Cindy at Caprice Escorts, he then has a very circumspect conversation about procuring "restraints" for his "special needs" and her 24-hour availability. She signs off with a rather coy "psionara", and the PCs come to the realization that since prostitution is legal around here, it is the absolutely perfect setup to access organized crime and foreign dignitaries and the idle rich and just about anybody else PSI might want to get their hooks into.

After a brief (very brief) discussion about Elvis impersonations, they eventually concoct a plan to set Impulse up as competition for Bender, and thus get her attention. Dowser agrees to shift his fix to Bender, and Psypher will talk to Impulse about it.

Dowser takes the shuttle out to the airport and rents a nondescript car (a white Tempo, actually) to "stake out" Bender in.

Eventually, Impulse makes her way downstairs and joins Limato-san. She asks where Mr. Downs is, and Psypher tells her about the car. In response to her inquiry about whether or not the cell has made contact yet, he replies yes, four times and at a cost of $200. She doesn't pursue the matter any further, and he fills her in on the plan. Impulse suggests that she pick the PCs up right under Ms. Jordan's nose, and Psypher agrees. They decide to go shopping for Maximum Elegance.

They get Impulse a makeover (which Dowser will later confide renders her "stunningly adequate"), and a fabulous gown.

Out Nailhead Road, Dowser gets a clairvoyant fix on Bender while she's out walking poolside. He is alarmed to notice a very familiar 5-series BMW with California plates parked in her driveway, next to her Mercedes and the housekeeping van. He immediately calls Psypher on the 'link and expresses his concern over finding the Notionmobile. Psypher promptly ditches Impulse over the pretense of needing to buy a camera to complete his "Japanese tourist" disguise. Grabbing a taxi, he speeds for the Jordan house, while Dowser moves in to confront and stall.

Dowser rings the doorbell, and the scantily-clad Meryl greets him. After inviting him in and listening amusedly to a bit of his blather, she promptly realizes that he's an agent of PSI. He tries to entice her with the intrigue angle. She expresses no particular interest in abdicating her current position as the reigning Queen of Las Vegas in favor of a criminal/fugitive/terrorist lifestyle.

In response to Bender's statement that she doesn't trust PSI, Dowser remarks that he doesn't either. When she asks him why he's working for them then, he replies that he's "just a go-between", and she mutters to herself that "he warned me this could happen."

About this time Psypher, in the seldom-used guise of Terry DuPont (Cajun male), shows up, and expresses his desire to talk. By this point, Meryl seems to be taking the whole thing quite in stride.

Bender laughs at Psypher's assumption that she's a "friend of Notion's", remarking that she doubts he has any. With some exasperation, Psypher explains that "we're not PSI, we're just *with* PSI." She then teases them about "career ladders", and whatnot, confessing that "of course" she knows about PSI, and yes, she's also heard of Dr. Frost. She then condescendingly quips about their "noble aim" to keep PSI from "butt-fucking the world" while staying alive at the same time. The PCs inform her that they've brought Impulse along, which Bender finds "quaint".

Suddenly, she sees the whole plan ["I *do* have Unluck, don't I?"] and for some unexplained reason, decides to go along with it. They agree to "meet" at Caesar's tomorrow night, and she invites them to leave. Dowser keeps his fix on her.

Psypher buys a camera on the way back, and Dowser mindscans for Impulse. Psypher calls Matrix on the mindlink and has her relay a message to Impulse to meet back at the rooms. Psypher switches to Limato-san, complete with white suit and state-of-the-art camera, and the lads go shopping for the girls. They buy a feather boa for Touchstone, and a rhinestone tiara for Matrix (Diadem was an early codename PSI used for her), but are unable to acquire a racy camisole for Deuce. Also, a red rose is purchased for Impulse.

By mid-afternoon, they return to Psypher's room and call Impulse on the phone to let her know they're back. She's not particularly interested in hearing all about Psypher's new camera, as she's busy getting ready. She instructs them to knock on her door when they're all set.

Dowser returns to his room, and he and Psypher continue their discussion of their plans over the 'link. Dowser gets a phone call from Impulse who requests that they stop sending their 'link back and forth through her room (as it is the middle one). Dowser informs Psypher (over the 'link), and they knock it off.

Dowser goes to get Impulse, who looks quite "stunning", and gives her the rose. She sends him to shower and change back into his tux, and has his lackey Psypher make dinner reservations. She'll wait downstairs in the bar.

Psypher makes reservations for two at a nice restaurant, and then slips off to buy the camisole for Deuce. Dowser gets washed and dressed and goes to the bar, where he finds Impulse waiting for him, with the rose nestled snugly in her décolletage.

They take the Tempo (which she understands was selected to be discreet, not stylish) to the restaurant. Over dinner, she seems to be holding her liquor much better than last night [Remember kids, if you drink, don't psi!]. She makes eyes at him, but he's playing hard to get. Eventually, she lures him with the old [?] "can you read my mind?" ploy. Misjudging his strength, she completely drops her defenses to allow it. He is able to read the genuine affection present, but also detects a lurking terror underneath it. Concentrating, a second reading shows him that the source of her fear is 'Slayer. He remarks to Natalia that her thoughts are "interesting", and she breathlessly asks him to tell them to her. Embarrassed, he remarks that a gentleman doesn't discuss such thing with a lady in public. She slyly replies that a telepath doesn't have to, and playing footsie with him under the table, invites him to "send her".

Using her power of emotion detection, she laughingly sits back and remarks that he feels much more at ease this evening and asks if she can do anything to help further. He says he'll get back to her on that.

Meanwhile, Psypher has caught up with them and decides to hang out in the restaurant bar, where he can surreptitiously observe them. When Impulse goes to powder her nose, Dowser calls him, and confirms that Bender is home alone. They decide that Dowser will take Impulse to the Tropicana after dinner ("We can't go to Caesar's, we're going there tomorrow!"). Psypher gets them two reservations to see Mel Tormé. Dowser watches the show, but Impulse watches Dowser. Eventually, as the evening wears on, the PCs observe that Meryl Jordan is basically immobile and at home, and Psypher suggests that they call it a night for that little project.

Impulse takes Dowser for a walk, and they inadvertently lose the trailing Psypher. They stop and get some champagne, and while Impulse is distracted, Dowser calls Psypher over the 'link and confirms that the shapeshifter is going off duty.

Mr. Downs and Ms. Soyev have a lovely little romantic stroll, complete with moonlight kisses, whispered sweet nothings, and all around good times. Natalia remarks as to how sweet and nice he's being (in contrast to the previous evening) and that she wants him to know she's not trying so hard tonight. He is most appreciative. Eventually they wind up back at The Dunes. Dowser remarks that he had better stay up all night, and has been practising re-acquiring his clairvoyant lock on Bender using his mindscan. As their quarry obviously isn't going anywhere, Natalia persuades Dowser to lock onto her. The get to her room, and miraculously, the bourbon is still there.

They make love for several hours until the crack of dawn. Psypher, having crashed some time earlier, later reports having "great dreams".

Afterwards, there is much pillow talk. Impulse confides in Dowser that she is, in fact, quite terrified, and had come to Vegas hoping to merely gain his confidence. During her routine monitoring of Psymon's medical charts, she has inadvertantly discovered the Darke/DeVille conspiracy. Now that she knows she can trust Dowser, she informs him that Psymon is being kept in a vegetative state, allowing Darke to seize control of the organization. She is convinced that if Mind Slayer were to telepathically uncover the duplicity, there's no telling how badly she might react. Natalia is certain that the enraged 'Slayer would consider her guilty by association, if not an outright co-conspirator, and slaughter her ruthlessly. Dowser attempts to assuage her fears, but she responds that he simply doesn't know what 'Slayer is truly capable of. She couldn't believe that DeVille had put her in so vulnerable a position, which is why she broke with him and ran to the only person she felt she could trust.

They both realize that Mind Slayer can't simply be killed, as the baby she's carrying is both an innocent (as truly innocent as anyone involved with PSI could possibly be), and also a potentially major resource, as an indirectly eugenic result of PSI's research and development.

Dowser suggests that perhaps Impulse herself could influence 'Slayer to emotional restraint, but Natalia replies that she's nowhere near strong enough. He asks why she hasn't told all this to Omega, but has to admit she has a point in her assertion that he would automatically assume that she was guilty of the conspiracy, and had simply decided to betray them for some reason.

She confesses that she had considered approaching the PCs about recruiting their help in simply killing Psymon, as the only "reliable" telepaths left in PSI are Mind Slayer and Dr. Frost. If some way could be found to conceal it from them, it might solve the problem. But by this time Natalia is exhausted, and collapses into sleep, safe and secure in Dowser's arms.

Still locked onto Impulse and therefore not at all sleepy, Dowser immediately calls and wakes Psypher over the 'link, filling him in on the details of this new development. They discuss it at some length.

They review the list of people they trust. First of all, they trust each other. Secondly, they *might* be able to trust Impulse. Bender has her own agenda. Ditto Touchstone.

They agree that the baby is an innocent, but Psypher confides in Dowser that he thinks he can take 'Slayer, if it comes to it. Dowser is skeptical, at which point Psypher informs him that Mentalla is of the opinion that he can slay Dr. Destroyer, and is seeking to recruit him to that end. Dowser is rather stunned by this candid admission, and Psypher is confident that he can "probably" survive mortal combat with Mind Slayer.

Then the "we can take PSI" plan is resurrected and analyzed. If the PCs flee, they need to take Matrix with them, otherwise PSI will be able to find them. And besides, they can't break the mindlink alone from this end, which means PSI would have an easier time of locating them.

On the issue of trusting Impulse, the PCs note that she's not actually anti-PSI, and is grateful for the opportunity to work with Dr. Frost.

Also, some mention is made of Touchstone's clandestine ability to send back with invisible telepathy when read by another telepath, a trick which Dowser might find occasion to use.

Dowser wonders, though, that Darke must certainly have the Mind Slayer problem figured, and must be assumed to be "covering his ass", probably with Ego, and maybe also then with Soulfire. As for Dr. Frost, she's always got herself. And what of Omega? Dr. Frost has been working on his battlesuit, but to what end?

The PCs discuss the merits of waking Psymon up. And if push comes to shove, and the child is to have only one parent, which shall it be? What kind of mother will 'Slayer make? If the kid is her only link with Psymon, she *might* be quite devoted to it, with proper *counseling.*

Suddenly they hit upon their scheme. What if they bring Psymon out of his near-coma *during the birth*?! Can they trust Impulse in this? If she is personally responsible for bringing Psymon around, 'Slayer won't do her. And if the PCs are there participating, they too avoid suspicion as co-conspirators.

About 0900, Dowser "sort of" wakes Impulse to inquire about the possibility of waking Psymon during the birth. Impulse groggily replies that it's worth a try, but that she needs to assist in the post-natal examination of the infant. She suggests that Psypher could stand in for her at the birthing (perhaps a course in midwifery is in order), and then the PCs could show up to present Psymon to the madonna. She excuses herself and staggers off to "take a pee and take a pill" [Orthonovum 777, if you must know]. She returns, sets her alarm for 1500 hours, puts out the Do Not Disturb sign, kisses her new boyfriend, and crashes like a freight train. The PCs decide to again avail themselves of some delicious $1 breakfasts.

Over breakfast, Psypher confesses that he likes Impulse, since she's the first member of PSI to show a shred of decency. Suddenly a horrible thought strikes him: what if Dr. Frost nicks the baby? Well, the little nipper couldn't be any worse off with her than with PSI (but don't let Ashton hear you say that).

After breakfast, Dowser purchases some slinky undies for Impulse to wear under her killer dress tonight. The day passes otherwise uneventfully.

At 1700, Impulse rings her "sweetie" in his room, and he tells her that they're set to go at 1900. Dowser (thoughtfully using the phone) calls and wakes Psypher. As they do not have a specific time to meet Bender, they plan to just play it by ear. Dowser makes dinner reservations. Not wanting to risk falling asleep once he unfixes on Impulse and before he can locate Bender, Dowser drives out to her house. Unable to catch a glimpse of her through a window, and having problems with his mindscans, he finally just walks up and rings her doorbell. He locks on to her when she answers, and bidding her *au revoir*, heads back to town, leaving her dumbfounded.

Impulse calls Psypher in his room to ask after "my sweet Rod", and Psypher ends up taking her down to the bar to await Dowser's return. Psypher is patting himself on the back as a yenta. Eventually, they meet Dowser and the trio proceeds to dinner. About halfway through dinner, Dowser senses Bender going to Caesar's, and the team arrives there about 2030.

Bender is busily doing her thing at the Craps table, practically glistening while making a major production of leaning over to toss the dice. The PCs gravitate into her orbit, and Impulse maneuvers to take her turn at the dice. Dowser reads Bender's mind, and finds her wondering about what Notion's up to and if the house will be okay.

Psypher shifts his attention to Impulse, and uses his thespian skills to divert the crowd's attention to the redhead. At which point, the PCs (having mental sense) see Bender sock her firmly with a mental attack. Impulse practically doubles over, but manages to hang on to Psypher, who helps her to a chair and gets the crowd to give her some air. Dowser inquires of Bender as to the necessity of it, and then goes to help his girlfriend, who is busily swaying the crowd into giving her its sympathy. Psypher confronts Bender, but the crowd seems to ignore them. She craps out and grabs his arm with a hearty "lay on, MacDuff", and collecting Dowser and Impulse, they all split.

Impulse doesn't seem to be injured, although she has certainly had the wind knocked out of her. She spends the ride quietly hanging onto Dowser and keeping a wary, if curious, eye on Ms. Jordan. They drive back to The Dunes, and convene in Dowser's room. Bender orders up coffee and champagne.

Psypher begins lecturing Bender at some length. She even seems to be paying attention to his chastising remarks (maybe a come-on), but between them, the PCs observe that she seems to be using her invisible mental illusions in a typically alluring manner. They admonish her to cease and desist, but she claims ignorance of whatever it is they're accusing her of. Impulse finishes in the bathroom, and looking somewhat bedraggled, comes out and quietly sits down and clings to Dowser.

The PCs continue to attempt to interrogate their subject, but she remains less than ideally cooperative, actually getting a menacing tone to her when she perceives not-entirely-veiled threats coming from them. Dowser attempts to use the PSISCANNER on her, but she seems to be messing with it as well (which she also denies). She informs them that she's already packed and ready to go, which comes as a bit of a surprise to Impulse. It's now "0-dark-30" hours, and the PCs finally admit to Ms. Jordan (and themselves) that they're just trying to impress her. They all decide to call it a night; Dowser in particular wants to crash since he has been using his powers to put off sleep since the team arrived.

Bender will take Dowser's room (as it is virtually unused), and Dowser takes his stuff and Impulse to her room, with Psypher's help. After that's done, Bender has Psypher drink a toast with her to "world domination". He asks her how mush discretion she's capable of, and she replies that she can have as much as she needs. She then gives him a big kiss, throws him out into the hallway, and slams the door shut behind him, giggling to herself and the rest of the champagne magnum.

The next morning, Psypher arises at 0500. Impulse wakes up at 0730, feeling rather frisky, but Dowser is out cold. The PCs acquire assorted poker chips, dice, cards, and matchbooks for the folks at home, and just make their plane. Impulse calls Matrix on the mindlink to report the team plus one inbound, on schedule, and condition green. On the flight back, Bender spends some time being pals with Impulse, and Dowser establishes a mindlink with his new girlfriend. He also discovers that if he is willing to spend END, he can make his own 'links invisible.

END PART TWO

Just A Thought...

Lately, especially since Void moved to Miami, I've been thinking about the need for a national Gamers' Database.

The primary purpose of the Database would be to allow gamers to meet and contact each other, especially when moving to new cities, and in need of new playing groups.

The master list, and smaller, specialized lists, could be useful to gaming companies, convention planning committees, and other such groups.

The RPGA is supposed to provide such a service, but even some of its proponents will concede, that it really only adequately serves those gamers who go to cons and compete in tournaments.

The process of establishing such a database would be relatively simple, though time- and money-consuming.

Acquiring a mailing list of gaming stores from distributors such as Chessex and The Armory, should be easy, especially with the promise of access to the Database (for Direct Mailing purposes) when assembled.

Flyers, advertising the Database, could then be sent to the gaming stores around the country to be placed on their bulletin boards. (How many gaming stores have you been in that didn't have bulletin boards?)

To assure maximum market coverage, advertisements would have to be placed in all the major gaming magazines.

Between correspondence, printing, mailing, and advertising, the initial costs of developing the Database would be several hundred dollars.

Becoming listed on the Database should be free. Any income would come from the sale of output... i.e. the aforementioned lists of area gamers, as well as the larger lists for commercial and other endeavors.

Of course, after reading the flyer reproduced in the MOC Newsletter from the Crusade To Stamp Out Science Fiction, I worry about such a database getting into the wrong hands.

I would very much like to hear from you all regarding this idea. Am I being hopelessly optimistic about being able to get gamers to get involved in anything? Am I missing any important logistical, financial or legal problems. If I were to attempt such a project, would I lose my shirt? My privacy? My sanity?

Whaddaya Think?

Void

Next Issue:

Joker In The Matrix—

The third and final installment of Void's Operation: Mind Games campaign, in which all hell breaks loose.

People I Have Been—

He's big. He's strong. He's goofy-looking. He's Hoedown™ , hero to some, lummox to others.

Here There Be Dragons—

Enough Champions and Battletech stuff already! Null does have other interests, and one of them is Echieth: World of Change. (Sounds like a Junior High School Filmstrip doesn't it?) Journey with us as we explore a gameworld which has survived three, count 'em, three different game systems, and is about to be faced with a fourth.

Null's Scary 'Mechs—

You asked for it! (actually just Jon Hanna did) The dreaded Monkey 'Mech. Booga! Booga!

Other Stuff—

Who knows. Depends on how much time Void can squeeze out of his glamorous Miami lifestyle.

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There. So how's that for a pretentious opening for my first MOTIVE submission? Those of you who know me, know also my obsession with the electronic idiot box. This is my first real attempt to get some useful material out of my hands and into the public purview.

Statement of Goals and Purposes:

What I hope to bring you via this column is a variety of game aids, tips, and useful tidbits concerning the use of computers in gaming; and gaming-related activities (including publishing). On top of my mental spike-file are such topics as:

- Improved character sheets
- Tips and reviews on computer RPGs
- Creative alternatives on computer games (or "how to cheat at solitaire")
- Cheap graphics programs that can really enchance your presentation
- Mapping for gamemasters
- Altering photos for fun and profit ("a picture is worth a thousand bytes")
- Creating your own system in two easy pages

I welcome other suggestions, as some of these are pretty awful.

The topic of the month is item one, improved character sheets. Some systems, particually Advanced Dungeons and Dragons, provide no character sheets with the original material, or offer substandard alternatives at inflated prices for later purchase. Other systems; such as Star Wars, TORG!, and Warhammer Fantasy Role-Playing; provide excellent templates. This tells me that the game designers are either too lazy to provide proper materials, or ignorant of the techniques necessary to create a useful character building tool. I have attempted to remedy this lack with several custom sheets, which follow my diatribes.

Included in this issue:

AD&D	Front and Back
ShadowRun	
Marvel Super Heroes	
Twilight 2000	Skill Generation Table

Character Sheet

Name:

Str:	+hit	+dmg	open	bend
Int:	% %know	min/level/max		
Wis:	atk adj	bonus	% %fail	
Dex:	react	missle	defense	
Con:	hp	% shock	% resur	#res
Cha:	#hench	loyal	react	
Com:	+ wt. Bonus	add. lang		

RACE:
CLASS:
ALIGN:
LEVEL:
XPS:

Height: Age:
Weight: Sex:
Soc. Class:
Vision:
Eyes:
Hair: Move:

Save Matrix	Base	Mi
Poison/Para/Death		
Rod/Staff/Wand		
Petrify/Polymorph		
Breath Weapon		
Spell		

God or Pantheon:

Mythos:
Sphere:

Colors:
Totem:
Rainment:

Holy Days:
Place:
Sacrifice:
(frequency):

Hit Points 1____ 2____ 3____ 4____ 5____ 6____ 7____ 8____ 9____ 10____ 11____ 12____ 13____ Total:

Non-Weapon Proficiencies

Special Characteristics

WEAPONS CHART

√ Proficiency	'S' Specialized	# of attacks	Bonus Hit	Bonus Dmg	Damage S-M	Damage L	Range: S	Range: M	Range: L

To Hit	
10	
9	
8	
7	
6	
5	
4	
3	
2	
1	
0	
-1	
-2	
-3	
-4	
-5	
-6	
-7	
-8	
-9	
-10	

Languages

Armor Type and Class

Front	Back

Character Sketch or Notes

Miscellaneous

Special Items

Gear

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Character Sheet

Page 2

Platinum (PP) 5 GP 50 SP	Gold (GP) 1/5 PP 10 SP	Electrum (EP) 1/2 GP 10 SP	Silver (SP) 1/10 GP 10 CP	Copper (CP) 1/100 GP 1/10 SP	Other

#	Gems, Jewels, and Components, Etc.

Journal

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Henchmen, Helpers, and Animals

Name:

Str:	Race:
Int:	Class:
Wis:	Align:
Dex:	Level:
Con:	Sex: Move:
Cha:	Age: Vision:

Hit Points: Thaco: AC:

Name:

Str:	Race:
Int:	Class:
Wis:	Align:
Dex:	Level:
Con:	Sex: Move:
Cha:	Age: Vision:

Hit Points: Thaco: AC:

Animal:
Name:
Move: Capacity:

ShadowRun

Name:
Street Name:
Race:
Archetype:
Lifestyle:
NuYen: ¥
Karma:
Sex:
Age:

Skills/Chips/Programs	Rating	

Attributes

Physical	Rating
Body	___
Quickness	___
Strength	___
Mental	
Charisma	___
Intelligence	___
Willpower	___
Special	
Essence	___
(Magic)	___
Reaction	___

Condition Moniters

Physical (wounds)		Mental (fatigue)	Vehicle (damage)		Cyberdeck (crash)
☐	← Unconcious →	☐	☐	← Destroy/Dump →	☐
☐		☐	☐		☐
☐		☐	☐		☐
☐		☐	☐		☐
☐	← Serious →	☐	☐	← Serious →	☐
☐		☐	☐		☐
☐		☐	☐		☐
☐	← Moderate →	☐	☐	← Moderate →	☐
☐		☐	☐		☐
☐	← Light →	☐	☐	← Light →	☐

Damage Modifiers

Damage	T#	Initiative
Light	+1	-1
Moderate	+2	-2
Serious	+3	-3

Allergies

Substance ________
Severity ________
Racial Adv. ________

Cyberdeck		Vehicle	
Type	______	Type	______
Persona	______	Handling	______
Hardening	______	Speed	______
Memory	______	Body	______
Storage	______	Armor	______
Load	______	Signature	______
I/O	______	Pilot	______
Response	______	Firmpoints	______
Hitchers	______	Hardpoints	______
Vidscreen	______		

Weapons Make & Model	Type	Wt.	Cost	Ammo	Conceal	Reach	Short	Medium	Long	Extreme	Dmg.	Code
			¥				-	-	-	-	/	/
			¥				-	-	-	-	/	/
			¥				-	-	-	-	/	/
			¥				-	-	-	-	/	/
			¥				-	-	-	-	/	/
			¥				-	-	-	-	/	/

Spells and Cyberware	Force Rating	Staging Cost	Drain Ess

Armor	Conceal	Bllst	Impact

Defense Pool
Armed ____

Unarmed ____

Dodge Pool ____

Hacking/Magic ____

Astral Pool ____

Gear / Contacts

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MARVEL SUPER HEROES

Hero's Name: ____________________
Hero's Identity: ____________________
Player's Name: ____________________

Group: ____________________
Origin: ____________________
Age: __________ Sex: __________

Ability Rankings

	Rank	Rank Num.	Adjustments
(F)ighting			
(A)gility			
(S)trength			
(E)ndurance			
(R)eason			
(I)ntuition			
(P)syche			
Resources			
Popularity			

Health F+A+S+E	Karma R+I+P

	Green	Yellow	Red
Shift 0	66	95	100
Feeble	61	91	100
Poor	56	86	100
Typical	51	81	98
Good	46	76	98
Excellent	41	71	95
Remarkable	36	66	95
Incredible	31	61	91
Amazing	26	56	91
Monstrous	21	51	86
Unearthly	16	46	86
Shift X	11	41	81
Shift Y	7	41	81
Shift Z	4	36	76
Class 1000	2	36	76
Class 3000	2	31	71
Class 5000	2	26	66
∞	2	21	61

(minimum score required for color result)

Movement (Areas)	Initiative Modifiers			Advancement Fund Karma	Karma Pool

Special Abilities: Powers, Talents, and Contacts

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Twilight 2000 Skills Generation System

Starting Skill Points:

Military	Background	Education

Prerequisites:
Aircra lls R LAP
Scuba cannot be higher than SWM

Skill Points Spent

ABBR.	Skill Title	Current Level	Base Level	Military 01-50	Military 51-80	Bkgrnd 01-50	Bkgrnd 51-80	Educatn 01-50	Educatn 51-80
ACM	Aircraft Mechanic								
ACV	Air Cushion Vehicle					▨	▨	▨	▨
AKN	Area Knowledge								
BC	Body Combat		20						
BIO	Biology			▨	▨	▨	▨		
CBE	Combat Engineer			x2		▨	▨	▨	▨
CHM	Chemistry			▨	▨	▨	▨		
CMP	Computer								
COM	Communications								
CRM	Combat Rifleman		20			▨	▨	▨	▨
CVE	Civil Engineer			▨	▨	▨	▨		
DEM	Demolitions			x2		x3		▨	▨
DIS	Disguise							▨	▨
ELC	Electronics								
EQ	Equestrian			▨	▨			▨	▨
FO	Forward Observer					▨	▨	▨	▨
FOR	Forage					x2		▨	▨
FRG	Forgery							▨	▨
FRM	Farming			▨	▨				
FSH	Fishing			▨	▨	½		▨	▨
GEO	Geology			▨	▨	▨	▨		
GS	Gunsmith					▨	▨		
HB	Hunting Bow			▨	▨				
HEO	Heavy Equip. Operator							▨	▨
HIS	History: __________			▨	▨	▨	▨		
HIS	History: __________			▨	▨	▨	▨		
HNT	Hunting			▨	▨			▨	▨
HOB	Hobby: __________			▨	▨			▨	▨
HOB	Hobby: __________			▨	▨			▨	▨
HRB	Herbal Medicine			▨	▨			▨	▨
HW	Heavy Weapons					▨	▨	▨	▨
IF	Indirect Fire					▨	▨	▨	▨
INS	Instruction								
INT	Interrogation					▨	▨	▨	▨
JP	Jet Pilot		▨			▨	▨		
	Totals:								

Skill Points Spent

ABBR.	Skill Title	Current Level	Base Level	Military 01-50	Military 51-60	Bkgrnd 01-50	Bkgrnd 51-80	Educatn 01-50	Educatn 51-80
LAP	Light Aircraft Pilot					▨	▨		
LCG	Large Caliber Gun					▨	▨	▨	▨
LNG	Language: __________								
LNG	Language: __________								
LNG	Language: __________								
LP	Lockpick			▨	▨			▨	▨
LTA	Lighter-than-air Pilot		▨					▨	▨
MC	Melee Combat		20			▨	▨	▨	▨
MCY	Motorcycle							▨	▨
MEC	Mechanic								
MED	Medical					▨	▨		
MEP	Multiple-engine Pilot		▨			▨	▨	▨	▨
MER	Mercantile			▨	▨				
MET	Meteorology			▨	▨	▨	▨		
MNE	Mining Engineer			▨	▨	▨	▨		
MTL	Metallurgy			▨	▨	▨	▨		
MTN	Mountaineering							▨	▨
NPE	Nuclear Power Engineer			x2		▨	▨	x2	
NWH	Nuclear Warhead					▨	▨	▨	▨
PAR	Parachute							▨	▨
PER	Perception $\left\{ \frac{EDU + INT + RCN}{3} \right.$	▨		▨	▨	▨	▨	▨	▨
PST	Pistol					▨	▨	▨	▨
RCN	Recon			x2		x2		▨	▨
RWP	Rotor Wing Pilot		▨			▨	▨		
SBH	Small Boat Handling							▨	▨
SCD	Scuba Diving		▨						
SCR	Scrounging							▨	▨
SKI	Skiing								
SSS	Sailing Ship Seaman			▨	▨			▨	▨
SWM	Swimming		20						
TAC	Tactics			x2		x3		▨	▨
TVD	Tracked Vehicle Driver							▨	▨
TW	Thrown Weapon		20			▨	▨	▨	▨
ULP	Ultralight Pilot			▨	▨				
WVD	Wheeled Vehicle Driver		40						
	Totals:								

Column In Search Of A Clever Heading

(Subtitled: Dawoo's imitation of Chad's last 'zine,
at the request of the OE.)

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Asheville, NC
28804

Dear Fellow Motiveers,

I apologize for the lack of mailing comments this time; I am doing this in a bit of a rush so that I can hand-carry my submission to Athens, thereby saving mailing costs. The life of a colege student is a frugal one.

The search for a clever title goes on. I welcome suggestions for titles; I really enjoyed Keith's James Joyce imitation last issue.

The informal topic for this issue is game systems: Complex vs simple. I think both have merit. The Mongoloid-simple systems for TOON and Paranoia work well for them, just as more complex systems work well for Champions and Top Secret. I think it isn't so much an issue of is one game system better than another or is a complex game mechanic inferior or superior to a simpler one, but rather it seems a question of does the system reflect the genre accurately? Champions is often referred to as a game of number-crunching, but those who enjoy it find that the mechanic simulates well the comic-book genre. Of course, they may be disposed to favorable interpretations, but that is psychology, not gaming. Simpler systems like Paranoia leave the players free to indulge in Paranoia's particular brand of silliness. Notice that realism doesn't necessarily enter into it. Instead, it is a genre question. One hears complaints about a system's seeming unrealism (surrealism?) and how that it doesn't work that way in the real world. It that the real real world or the real world where your mage can cast fireballs and your cleric can raise the dead?

What follows is my first attempt at game-mastering, as opposed to scenario-running. While developing this game, I found myself saying things like, "How can I weave this subplot into my storyline?" and "How can I fit this NPC into the campaign without resorting to retrofitting?" I originally started this game as a pickup at the (Asheville) Club, as a solution to the problem of getting new members into a game quickly, without spending days making up characters. I set the game in Stronghold, the Champions' version of Marvel's Vault, the supervillian containment facility. I put the PCs in suits of powered armor and gave them similar skills, leaving room for them to add some personal skills and disads to individualize the characters. In practice, this cut down pre-game time to about 20 minutes. I also wanted to turn out good role-players to pass on to other GMs, if I could, and thought that a rigid, almost military environment would be a good way to ease all the players into the game, instead of the usual one or two leaders and rest following. The players enjoyed the game and wanted to keep playing, and so I found myself responding to their demands for more by creating a campaign. I'm at the bottom of my page, so I'll close until next time.

STRONGHOLD CAMPAIGN

Setting: Multiverse Psiwar[d]: a subset of Multiverse Psiwar where trenchcoats and gritty realism have replaced Spandex and flashy super-powers. The [d] signifies that this is the "Dawoo" sub-universe of multiverse Psiwar.

Stronghold Supervillian Prison: This Stronghold differs from the Classic Enemies scenario in that Guardians in powered armor replace the agents and robots. The layout is slightly also different; Level Two is the Support Level with a library, barbershop, canteen and sickbay. Civilian personnel staff these facilities with their living quarters also on this level. Level Five remains as the power plant and maintenance level, with the robot maintenance replaced by armor maintenance. There are 33 Guardians in three overlapping shifts: 0800-1700, 1600-0100, 2400-0900. Two Guardians monitor Security, two each guard levels one, three and four and one each guards levels two and five. Sgts Blakeley, Castleberry and Sullivan each supervise a shift. All guardians fall under the command of Lt Fenster who reports to Warden Kowalski.

Level Two houses medium-powered supervillians. Prisoners held on Level Two are: Slick, Panda, Raccon, Black Mamba, Mentalax, Freon, Leech, Arc, Oculon and Esper. Bomb, Fallout, Flower and the Remover are added in the narrative.

Level Three houses Bricks and other high-powered threats. On Three are: Ripper, Bulldozer, Black Diamond and Thunderbolt. Ringer is added in Episode Three with the rest of Mass Reaction.

Dramatis Personae:
Cichetti-Jac Cichetti
Nightlinger-Frank Slifer
Smith-Jeff Robasse
Jones-Kenny Austin
Corbinson-Scott Webb
O'Brien-Tim Sullivan
Shields-Patrick Betancourt
Sgt Blakeley-Sergeant of the Guard-1st shift
(played by Stewart MacWilliam in Episode Four)
Sgt Castleberry of the Guard-2nd shift
Sgt Sullivan-Sergeant of the Guard-3rd shift
Lt Fenster-Commander of the Guard
Warden Kowalski-Warden of Stronghold

Stronghold "Lingo"
Supernumerary- best-prepared Guardian of a Shift. He is exempt from duty unless an emergency arises.
"The Man"- slang for Supernumerary.
"The Old Man"- slang for commander, i.e. Warden Kowalski.
STRAC- acronym for "STanding Ready And Capable".
'cruit- new Guardians, still wet behind the ears.

Episode I: "Have you seen my Speedo?"

The PCs arrive via transport to Stronghold Supervillian Containment Facility, having been recruited from the military, Federal government and civilian police. Upon arrival, staff physicians and psychiatrists give the inductees thorough medical exams (disguised security checks) and inprocessing interviews (disguised psych evaluations). In Supply they are issued uniforms and the quartermaster assigns them bunk and armor numbers. Warden Kowalski gives them their in-briefing and Lt. Fenster assigns them to a shift, Sgt Blakeley's shift, first. After their briefing, Sgt Blakeley takes them down to the combat range for their armor familiarization exercise.

Technician Chambers fits the PCs into their armor as Sgt Blakeley briefs them on its capabilities:

> "The Warren Industries Mark I Powered Battlesuit is a state-of-the-art suit of powered armor providing the wearer with flexible response options when dealing with paranormal opponents. It consists of an outer polymer armor shell with internal microcircuitry controlled by an advanced cybernetic control system. Its capabilites include a particle blaster, strength augmentation, electricification of the armor shell, flight through bootjets, an internal air supply, infrared scanners and a radio comlink connected to the facility's security center. The wearer can also choose to customize the suit with the choice of one of three features: electrical energy bonds, an electrical nerve inductor or a blinding electrical arc."

Sgt Blakeley directs them to the combat range, where they find themselves faced with three holographic opponents: Oculon, Arc and Black Diamond. Guardians Nightlinger and Smith, turn in an average performance; Guardian Cichetti manages to distinguish himself by blasting a lightpole to bits with his particle blaster. Sgt Blakeley releases the PCs to quarters until their shift, giving them time to familiarize themselves with Stronghold.

The PC's prepare as best they can for the next day's shift, relying heavily on Chamber's advice. At Guard Mount the following day, Guardian Sterankov, a Russian national wins Supernumerary. Other Guardians include: Jeff Dupont, a Cajun; Mark Martin, a California Surferdude; Bill Phillips, an average Joe College type; Billy Edwards, an ex-Texas Ranger and Allan Blake, from Detroit. The PCs first shift passes uneventfully, the only excitement being the Warden's close-of-day inspection.

Episode II: "Does he take Talcum after his bath?"

The PCs begin a normal duty day. Before their shift, three newcomers, Jones, O'Brien and Corbinson, are inprocessed. Sgt Blakeley suggests that Cichetti, in view of his previous performance, join them on the combat range. Somewhat mollified, Cichetti manages to turn in a sterling performance along with the others.

At Guard Mount, Sgt Blakeley informs the PCs that they have the honor, as do all 'cruits, of participating in one of Stronghold's most noble traditions: Bath Day for Ripper, the facility's most notorious psycopathic brick. Ripper's corridor is sealed off, and after a raging battle, the PCs manage to subdue Ripper and give him a thorough scrubbing, even behind the ears. In fact, with six Guardians participating, they manage to turn in a record time, much to Sgts Sullivan's and Castleberry's dismay, (Sgt Blakeley had told them of Cichetti's poor performance and they had bet large sums of money with him that his new squad would spend most of their shift on their initiation). Sgt Blakeley is so pleased that, once they in-process the Remover, a new inmate from The METE, he gives his crew the rest of the shift off and stands them to a beer after duty hours.

The next day, the PCs are sent to Long Island for a pickup. The Champions have defeated three members of Mass Reaction; Bomb, Fallout and Flower, and have them ready for incarceration. As the PCs are returing home, they receive a distress call from New York adventurer Krystal Blue, who is in a Mexican Standoff with the notorious Auto-Gunner at a Manhattan Bank where he is threatening to Kill Hostages if she doesn't Surrender. With clearance, the PCs intervene. Despite their best efforts, Auto-Gunner kills four hostages before they subdue him. Guardians Corbinson, Smith and O'Brien deal with Auto-Gunner, Guardian Jones evacuates the hostages and Guardians Nightlinger and Cichetti deal with Auto-Gunner's helicoptering accomplices on the roof. Nightlinger gets some very good PR for Stronghold when he flies down from the roof of the bank, carrying the remains of the terrorists' helicopter, with the medias' cameras a'clickin'.

The PCs return home to get a gruff "Good job men, now get back to work!", from Warden Kowalski. After their shift, some of the men sign up for Tae Kwon Do classes with Sgt Castleberry and other study security systems(in the labs, this is Stronghold). The Duty month ends without further excitement.

Episode III: "The Veep is a VIP?!?"

The PCs return to duty after their month of R-n-R. At their first Guard Mount, Cichetti gets "The Man", much to everyone's dismay. He doesn't get much of a chance to enjoy it as everyone in Stronghold is very busy getting ready for an important VIP's visit tomorrow: Vice-President Dan Quayle. Security is to be doubled for visibility and no Supernumerary will be named tomorrow.

As the PCs go down to the canteen after their shift, Mrs. Mundy, the canteen clerk and resident gossip, tells them "confidentially" that she heard from a "very reliable source" that "one of them was somewhere in Stronghold...you know...a commie." The PCs take this with a grain of salt. Nightlinger also remembers to send his girlfriend flowers for her birthday.

Vice-President Quayle arrives with Secret Service and press in tow and begins babbling about the "importance to National Security of these brave souls..." and so on. Warden Kowalski takes him on a tour of the prison, babbling about the "most important security job in the Free World..."; cut from the same Conservative cloth, these two. As Kowalski is bragging about the strength of Stronghold's security, a terrorist hiding among the press opens fire with a mini-gun disguised as a camera. He kills most of the reporters and Secret Service. Taking the Warden and VP hostage, he holes up in the Warden's office, demanding that *his brothers* in the struggle for world equality be freed and that someone bring him lunch. He threatens to release the prisoners if his demands are not met and as a demonstration of his seriousness, opens the prisoner's cells on Level Three.

At this time, another drama begins. Ringer, leader of Mass Reaction, had been disguised as a member of the press. The terrorist's bullets didn't harm him, he was playing 'possum, waiting to pull out his aces when the time was right. While attention is on the VP, he makes his way down to Level Three, where he gathers his teammates and joins in the soiree as the inmates thrash the Guardians on Three. When no one is looking, Ringer closes the Questonite corridor doors, trapping the inmates and leaving his team free to make good their escape.

Meanwhile, the PCs, responding to the lunch demand, manage to bluff their way into Kowalski's office using the double-blind lunch maneuver and subdue the terrorist, saving the VP and Kowalski, who had been prepared to sacrifice his life for the Vice-President's. Thankfully, this is not necessary. As the PCs handcuff the terrorist, Kowalski yells at them to, "Stop lollygaggin' around and get down to Three and STOP THOSE COMMIES!" The PCs get a quick briefing via closed-circuit TV and hurry down to Three to engage the members of Mass Reaction.

After a long, drawn-out battle covering two floors of Stronghold, the PCs finally defeat Mass Reaction. During the fight, Ringer begs an unseen "comrade", the alleged mole, to help him escape the "Americanskis" but no help is evident. The PCs incarcerate Ringer on Level Four and busy themselves with mop-up. Twelve hours later, exhausted, they finally go to bed. Nightlinger is wakened in the middle of the night to sign for a telegram. It is from his girlfriend. It reads:

> THANKS OODLES FOR THE FLOWERS STOP THEY WERE VERY THOUGHTFUL STOP HOW DID YOU FIND OUT QUERY IM NOT EVEN SURE IF IM PREGNANT YET STOP
>
> LOVE AND KISSES
> YOUR HUGGY BEAR

Episode IV: "Not by the hair of my chinny-chin-chin!"

Nightlinger drafts a letter to his girlfriend which reads:

> I have heard the news about our child. It makes my heart race to know that a small part of me is growing inside of you. I don't know what kind of father I'll make, spending so much time away from home. But I have only one question, would you do me the honor of becoming my wife? I have wanted to ask you this before, my love, but I wanted to suprise you on my next month off and give you a ring. In lieu of the circumstances, there seems no better time than the present.
>
> All my love forever,
> Aaron.

Classes continue as the PCs finish their duty month without further excitement, except for a mysterious Wanda Wetsie doll which appears in Nightlinger's bunk with a note which reads, "Oh Fuck!".

During their off-time, Corbinson goes with Sterankov to New York's Russian neighborhood where they eat lots of borscht and smoked fish and play lots of chess. Sgt. Blakely takes his motorcycle and rides off to Alaska to do some hunting. Cichetti spends time with his pals at his old NY precinct. Jones does the same in Miami. Nightlinger is busy with wedding plans.

Duty resumes with the arrival of a new Guardian, Shields. He in-processes in time to serve regular duty with the rest of the squad. At his first Guard Mount, he undergoes Kowalski's speech about 'cruits not being eligible for "The Man" on their first shift. Phillips wins and Shields is assigned to Level Three with Cichetti, by now a seasoned veteran. The only excitement for the first part of the shift is the release of Mentalax as his parole is approved.

There is some excitement after lunch when the RED ALERT sounds. Monitors show two figures taking position over the exterior elevator doors. Scanners identify them as Neutron of the Conquerors and Charger of the Ultimates. Also coming into position are Wyvern and Anklyosaur of the Conquerors and Plasmoid of the Ultimates. Radar also marks two figures at high altitude, tenatively IDed as Binder and Blackstar of the Ultimates. Looks like a prison break folks.

The above occurs in seg 12. Sgt Blakeley responds by taking the elevator up to Level One to investigate. He attempts to buckle a swash by stepping onto the top of the ascending elevator, but misses and ends up on the floor inside it. Cichetti and Shields, witnessing the acrobatics, manage to stifle their laughter by turning off their suit radios. In seg 3, Neutron and Charger combine pushed attacks (8d6-1 RKA and 18d6 EB) on the (20 Def 12 Body) elevator door (I know that combining is used for Stunning. This is an Obvious Inaccessible Plot Device.). They repeat their attack in seg 5, managing to breach the outer door.

Binder drops Blackstar from 700', as Blackstar immediately increases his density to its maximum (6 tonnes). He is wearing a force field belt (+20 PD/ED) which Binder designed to protect him from the fall. However, it was not designed to withstand Neutron's Telekinetic push and Blackstar hits (doing at least 40d6). He penetrates to Level Three, imbedded in the floor, unconscious.

Wyvern and Anklyosaur follow immediately in seg 5, Wyvern attacking the Guardians and Anklyosaur prying Blackstar loose. Neutron follows them to Three and begins work trying open the cell doors, flinging Cichetti out of his way. Binder and Charger head for Level One in an effort to keep the escape route open. In seg 8, Neutron manages to open the cells, all the cells, on Three, and Slick and Arc, who were ready for the break-out, dash out into the central area. Shields manages to close the corridor doors as Slick grabs Neutron and Neutron Telekinetically grabs Anklyosaur, who has freed Blackstar. Wyvern and Arc run interference as Neutron flies out with his payload. Meanwhile on One, Sgt Blakeley, Nightlinger and Jones have been engaging Charger and Binder with little success. Corbinson has been on Two protecting the civilians. On Four, Sterankov closes his corridor doors as a precaution. Corbinson tries to pop up through Blackstar's hole to fire on Charger, but misses. In seg 12, Neutron flies outside Stronghold, with Wyvern following, carrying Arc. Sgt Blakeley has plans for Wyvern however and punches Wyvern as he clears the first floor, knocking him and Arc down onto the second level. Sgt Blakeley, Nightlinger, Jones and Corbinson take off after the escapees as Shields moves up to Two to deal with Wyvern and Arc. Cichetti stays down on Three to calm down the freed prisoners, who are fighting in the corridors. On Two, Shields manages to KO Wyvern as Arc escapes. The exterior squad attempts pursuit, but is driven off by Binder, Charger and Plasmoid as the others make good their escape. Cichetti manages to threaten and cajole the escapees on Two back into their cells.

Back inside, Sgt Blakeley appoints two Guardians as flying Guards until the exterior can be repaired and supervises the relocation of prisoners from the all-but-wrecked Three to Four, which only suffered a dented elevator door. The PCs stay on duty through second shift to insure security and retire, exhausted, well after midnight.

The next day, after their regular shift, Warden Kowalski calls them into his office to give them an official "Attaboy", and a message:

> "Men, in light of your outstanding performance both in and out of the facility, Congress has instructed me to offer you positions as agents of CASTLE, the Conclave for Anti-Supervillian, Anti-Terrorist Law Enforcement. Effective immediately, recruits for this agency are to be excused from regular duty to report at 0600 to the Helipad for transportation and inprocessing."

Stronghold Guardian Corpsman Suit - MK I

CHARACTERISTICS		
15	STR	5
20	DEX	30
18	CON	16
12	BODY	4
13	INT	3
10	EGO	0
10	PRE	0
10	COM	0
5	PD	2
5	ED	1
4	SPD	10
8	REC	2
36	END	0
35	STUN	0

DISADVANTAGES - 50+50 point base	
15	Monitored by Stronghold 14-
20	x2 STUN from magnetic attacks
15	2d6 from mental attacks
20	Hunted by supervillians who have been guests of Stronghold 11-
	+50 pts of character disads

POWERS AND SKILLS

3	PS:	
2	FAM: SGC armor	
3	Stronghold Operations 13-	
2	FAM: SGC lifter 11-	
2	Criminal Psychology 11-	
	______________________	
	______________________	
	______________________	
	______________________	
	______________________	
	SGC Armor (OIF) *	
37	57 pt Multipower *	
4u	9d6 EB 1/2 END *	2
3u	2d6 KA Damage Shield *	4
2u	+35 STR (not to figured CHA -1/2) *	(5)3
4u	4d6 NND/Flash/Entangle 1/2 END *	2
30	+15 PD/ED Armor *	
22	11" Flight 0 END *	0
7	LS: Self-contained breathing *	
3	+5 PRE *	
3	IR Vision *	
3	5pts Flash Defense *	
3	Radio Xmit/Receive *	

OCV:7 DCV:7 ECV:3 Phases:3,6,9,12

cost:	CHA	+	POWERS	=	TOTAL	=	DISADS	+	BASE
	73	+	147	=	220	=	120	+	100

This is the basic character outline. The PCs add the Professional Skill of their choice and 50 points of Disads to round it out.